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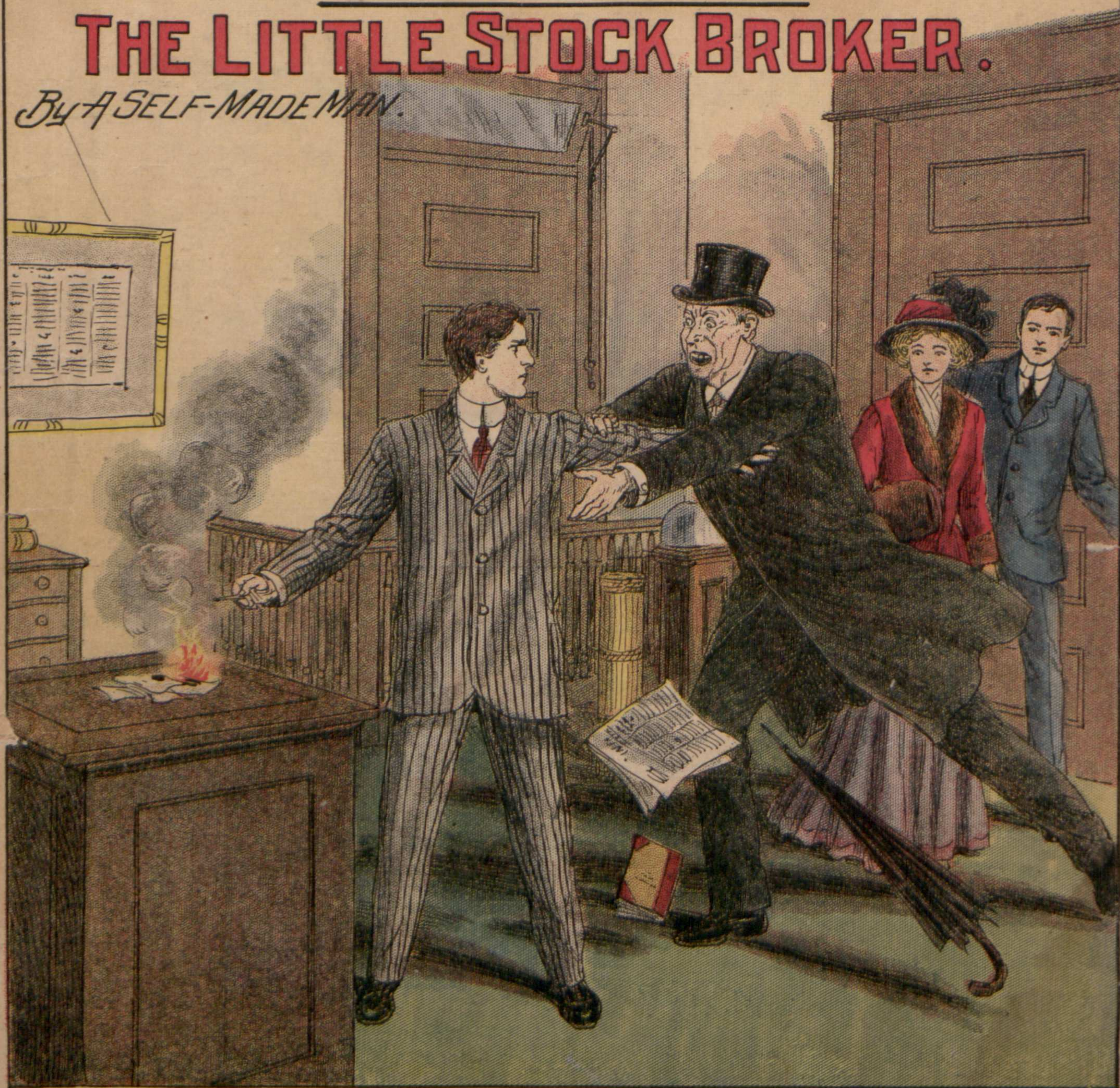
FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

THE LITTLE STOCK BROKER.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



"Hold! What are you doing?" cried the excited man, dropping his book, paper and umbrella, and striding forward to reach the burning papers. The little broker kept him off with his arm. Just then Will and his sister entered the room.

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STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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PRICE 5 CENTS.

The Little Stockbroker

OR,

THE BOY WITH MONEY TO BURN

(A WALL STREET STORY.)

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

WITHIN AN INCH OF HIS LIFE.

"There's one of the biggest guns in Wall Street," said Will Winship, nodding at a plainly-dressed, middle-aged man, standing in the entrance of a tall office building.

Bob Somers, Will's companion, turned and looked.

"I thought I knew most of the important personages of the Street by sight," he said; "but I'll have to admit I never saw him before."

"He doesn't show himself around much. He's a big operator in corners, pools, and such things. If the city or the Government finds it necessary to float a new bond issue, he subscribes to one of the syndicates that puts in a bid. They say he's worth thirty or forty millions."

"That's a lot of money. He's got it to burn. I wonder how it feels to know that one is worth so much as that?"

"Good, I imagine. No danger of ever going to the poor-house."

"I don't see what use so much money is to any one. A man as old as he can't expect to spend it. Just think of the responsibility on one's shoulders to keep track of investments footing up thirty or forty millions, and figuring what to do with the interest that comes in as regular as clock-work every six months. By the way, what's his name?"

"Thomas Brown."

The multi-millionaire in question, after standing in the doorway a matter of several minutes, started to go on his way.

Some workmen were making alterations to the adjoining

building, and a narrow fence had been erected around the front, except at the entrance, where people were continually going in and out.

All along the top of the fence, and over the entrance, a platform extended to protect the public from falling debris.

At the moment Mr. Brown left the adjoining building, workmen were hoisting a heavy piece of ornamented stone that was to fit in an opening above one of the windows.

Suddenly the hook holding the stone broke away from the rope and the weighty mass of masonry fell with a crash upon the platform.

Instead of breaking its way through, as it probably would have done had it struck the platform squarely, it glanced off toward the sidewalk.

At that moment Mr. Brown was right in line with it, and he was in a position of great peril.

Bob Somers, quick as a flash, dashed at the millionaire operator and gave him a tremendous shove, following along at his heels himself.

Quick as Bob was in his movements, the stone was even quicker, and had he not been short in stature, this story about him would not have been written, for the piece of masonry shaved his derby hat off his head, missing his skull by not more than an inch.

His friend, Will Winship, and a score of other onlookers, uttered exclamations of consternation, for at the moment it looked as if his head had been hit.

A miss, however, is as good as a mile in most cases, though so close a miss as Bob had is apt to take the starch out of the person concerned.

Bob's momentum sent him staggering forward on his

hands and knees, and several people rushed forward expecting to find that his head was crushed in.

Before they reached him he got on his feet, and looked around for his hat.

It lay, smashed flat as a pancake, under the stone, which was broken in three parts.

Naturally the stone sidewalk was somewhat damaged, too, but that fact concerned only the contractor in charge of the work.

A crowd began to gather quickly around Bob, and many inquiries as to whether he had sustained any material injury were made of him.

"No, I'm not hurt that I know of," replied Bob in a shaky tone, for he realized the peril he had escaped.

"I never saw a pluckier act," said one of the bystanders. "You saved that man's life, and if you were not a little fellow your own would have been sacrificed by your brave action."

"Well, gentlemen," said Bob, "you needn't worry any more about me. I feel all right, so I guess I'll get a move on and buy a new hat."

At that moment Mr. Brown pushed his way through the crowd and grasped the boy by the hand.

"Young man, you saved my life at the risk of your own. Allow me to express my gratitude," he said, feelingly.

"You're welcome, sir. I handled you rather roughly, for which I guess it is not necessary for me to apologize under the circumstances. It was the only way I could save you."

"The stone would have handled me a great deal rougher. Come with me to my office."

"You'll have to excuse me, sir, I must go and purchase a hat."

"Ah, your hat smashed? I will send for a new one for you."

"Never mind. There's a hat store on Broadway a couple of blocks from here. I can easily get one myself."

"Nonsense! You must come with me. By the way, what's your name?"

"Some people call me The Little Stockbroker, but my name is Bob Somers."

"The Little Stockbroker! Are you in the brokerage business?"

"Yes, sir. You are Mr. Thomas Brown, I believe?"

"You know me, I see."

"I never saw you till a few minutes before the accident, and then a friend of mine pointed you out to me, and told me your name."

"You have an office, I presume?"

"Yes, sir. In the Laidlaw Building, sixth floor."

"Well, come with me over to my office in Exchange Place."

The operator put his arm in Bob's and drew him away from the crowd.

They crossed Wall Street and walked down Broad.

Several brokers nodded at Bob, and no doubt wondered what he was doing on the street without his hat.

Nobody took any particular notice of Mr. Brown, as the brokers and financiers who knew him were not around at the moment.

The operator occupied a fine suite of offices on the third floor of a certain building.

He didn't enter his office by the main door, but let himself into his private room with a pass-key, and pointed at a chair near his desk, which he took possession of and opened.

"What size hat do you wear?" he asked the boy.

Bob told him and he wrote the size down on a piece of paper.

He wrote a few words on a pad, enclosed it with the paper in an envelope, sealed and addressed it.

Then he rang for his office boy.

When the lad entered he told him to deliver the note and bring back what he got at the store.

Turning to Bob, he said:

"You have done me a favor which it is quite impossible that I can ever repay, but I should like to show my appreciation in some way. Is there any way I can serve you?"

"Not that I know of, sir," replied Bob.

"In the future, maybe. You say you are a broker? Well, perhaps I can find some way of serving you. Have you got your business card with you?"

Bob handed him one.

"I will keep you in mind, and at the first chance you will hear from me."

"Thank you, Mr. Brown. Any favor in my line of business will be duly appreciated."

"How long have you been in business?"

"About three months."

"And before that you were employed in some broker's office?"

"Yes, sir—John Oakley's. He went to the wall through a sudden slump in O. & B., and his business was wound up."

"How are you making out?"

"The only customers I have had so far are out-of-town people I caught through my advt. in the papers, and the profit I made out of them hasn't amounted to a whole lot. I have done pretty well in a couple of private deals I put through. In fact, that is where my profit has come from."

The gentleman looked down at his desk for some moments as if thinking.

"Look here, Mr. Somers, suppose I give you a pointer on which you can rely, will you promise to keep it to yourself?" he said at length.

"Yes, sir," replied Bob, promptly.

"Very well. Then buy A. & C. at once—it's going now at 82—and hold it for 95. It may go to par, but I would not advise you to take any chances above the figure I have mentioned."

"All right, sir; I'll be guided by your advice. I am much obliged to you for the tip."

"You are welcome. It is not often that I give out a pointer to any one; but after what you did for me I am making an exception in your favor."

The conversation then proceeded on other lines till Mr. Brown's boy returned with a fine new hat, of the derby pattern, and Bob declared that it fitted him all right.

Then he said that he would not take up any more of the operator's time, and bidding Mr. Brown good-by, started for his own office.

CHAPTER II.

BOB BUYS AN OPTION.

The Laidlaw Building, while not a modern sky-scraper, was a very substantial structure of ten stories.

Bob's office on the sixth floor was a small room on a back corridor, with one window, which got its light and air from a small inclosed court.

The view from the window consisted of an endless succession of similar windows, not only opposite and to the right and left, but up and down.

Men and girls were either seated at these windows, or continually passing them, so that there was no lack of life in every part of the court.

Bob's door bore the following sign:

ROBERT SOMERS,
STOCKBROKER.

The room was furnished with a roll-top desk, a pivot chair, three common chairs, a safe, with Bob's name painted on it, a ticker, a letter file cabinet, and sundry other articles in keeping with the character of the business.

On the floor was a rug, and on the walls a couple of water-color pictures, flanked by maps of mining properties out West.

All the tenants and most of the clerks on the corridor knew the little stockbroker, as he was called, by sight, and they thought his presence in the building more of a joke than anything else.

He was only a boy, not yet nineteen, and was probably the youngest trader in the Street.

That a person of his years should have the nerve to branch out in the brokerage business on his own account passed the comprehension of his neighbors.

Possibly they wondered where he got hold of the funds necessary to open up.

The truth of the matter was he had made his capital by fortunate speculations in the market while in John Oakley's employ.

Nobody knew this, because he wasn't telling anybody his business.

Bob entered his office and started to open his safe in order to get the money he kept there, which he intended to take around to the little bank on Nassau street and put up on a marginal deal in A. & C.

He seldom had visitors, consequently he was somewhat surprised when the door opened and his next door neighbor, Broker Bunce, walked in on him.

Bunce was a portly man, whose manner would have impressed a stranger with the idea that he owned the building, if not a good share of Wall Street.

He prided himself on his shrewdness, and was always looking for the mighty dollar; not but everybody else in Wall Street was looking for the mighty dollar, too, but he was less scrupulous than the majority how he connected with it.

He had an idea that his young neighbor was a fair mark for a trader of his experience, and he had been figuring how he could annex a few of Bob's shekels.

"Well, my young neighbor," he said, beamingly, "I thought I'd drop in and see how you are getting along."

"That's very kind of you, Mr. Bunce," replied Bob, dryly.

He knew the broker by reputation, and did not think a whole lot of him.

"It's a weakness of mine to be friendly with those who are trying to mount the ladder that leads to, ahem! success. I was young myself once, and I look back with pride to the fact that I hoed my own road, just as you appear to be doing. I believe that we who have gone the road ought to lend a helping hand to others trying to make a start in life."

"That's a very nice sentiment, Mr. Bunce, but sentiment is rather at a discount in Wall Street."

"Quite true, young man, quite true; nevertheless, I am not insensible to the duty that I owe my fellow man," said Mr. Bunce, looking as if the milk of human kindness predominated in his thoughts. "By the way, are you buying anything at present?"

"I was thinking of taking a small flyer in A. & C."

"A. & C., eh? Nothing in it," said the broker, shaking his head, like a person whose authority on the subject of A. & C. was indisputable. "Don't touch it. Get in on Red Jacket. That's a mine that's going to make its stockholders wealthy. It's a veritable Golconda in embryo."

"I've heard of it, but it's merely a prospect."

"Admitted, but what was Jumbo, or the Florence, or the Consolidated, or a dozen other successful mines I might mention, at the start? All prospects. What was the famous Calumet & Hecla Copper originally but a prospect? Now look at it. Let me relate to you an actual fact in connection with the latter. In 1871 two young men were working side by side, earning \$3 a day. Out of their hard earnings each of them had saved \$1,000, which they had deposited in a bank. One day a gentleman tried to persuade them to buy some stock in the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company, just as I am trying to persuade you to buy Red Jacket. One refused to buy the stock, kept his money in bank at interest, allowed it to accumulate at compound interest, and to-day his investment is worth something over \$4,000. The other young man purchased 1,000 shares of the copper mining stock, whose par value was \$25, at \$1 a share. To-day his shares are worth \$650 each, or \$650,000, and he has received \$863,000 in dividends. The total value of his investment is \$1,513,000. What do you think of that?"

"I think it an instance of exceptional luck," replied Bob, who had seen the story printed in the prospectus of a mining company seeking capital.

"Well, Red Jacket, at 25 cents a share, par value \$50, offers the same chance. Buy five or ten thousand shares now, at bed rock price, and in thirty years hence you'll be worth a million."

"You think so?"

"Think so? I'm sure of it."

"Then I suppose you have loaded up on it yourself?"

"I have some of the stock, and as a particular favor to you I am willing to let you have some of my holdings."

"That is generous on your part if it's hard to get."

"My dear young neighbor, I like to see budding industry reap its reward. Shall I bring you in 5,000 shares?"

"Not to-day, because I'm interested, as I told you, in A. & C."

"Why are you interested in A. & C.? There is nothing in it."

"Well, I have an idea there is. It is ruling at 82. If I could buy a ten-day option on 1,000 shares I'd be willing to pay 84 for it, and deposit five per cent. of the current value as security that I'd take the stock within that time. If I failed to take it, of course I'd expect to forfeit my deposit."

"Hum! I might accommodate you, young man. Eighty-four, you say?"

"Yes. I'm willing to give two points to anybody who will sell me the call on 1,000 shares."

Mr. Bunce got up and looked over the tape of Bob's ticker.

He found the last quotation of A. & C. was 81 7-8.

"All right," he said. "Five percent. of 82 is \$4,100. If you wish to put that up I'll write you an option on 1,000 shares, delivery to be made at 84 any time within ten days."

That was satisfactory to Bob, and he said so.

While the broker was writing out the option at his desk he got the \$4,100 out of his safe.

"There's the option," said Bunce.

Bob looked it over to see that it was all right.

It was, so he paid over the money.

Mr. Bunce, satisfied he was going to collar some of the boy's money, soon after returned to his office and turned the \$4,100 over to his cashier.

All he had to do in order to make \$2,000 at least out of the deal was to go out and buy 1,000 shares of A. & C. at 82.

Bob had intended to buy 700 shares at that price, which would have taken all his capital, but having a sure thing in sight, he was willing to give 84 for the privilege of the call on 1,000.

Bunce, however, figured that there was little danger of A & C. taking a jump up, so he decided he would not buy it right away, for the purchase would require the outlay of \$82,000, and he didn't care to tie the money up for ten days if he could avoid doing it.

Besides, it might go down and then he could buy it cheaper.

Bob chuckled to himself as his visitor walked out.

"Thought he'd soak me with 5,000 shares of Red Jacket prospect at a quarter. I wasn't born yesterday. Rung in that old chestnut about the two young men and the Calumet and Hecla Company. It's true enough, I believe, but lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place. The chap who bought the copper stock when it was first put on the market made a ten-strike, because it was his luck. How many hundred people have taken the same chance and lost all their original investment! I doubt that Red Jacket will pan out a winner. If Mr. Bunce believed it looked as good as he claimed he wouldn't be so anxious to unload 5,000 shares on me. I did not think he'd sell me that option, but I dare say he figures that he can afford to tie up \$82,000 in order to make a couple of thousand profit sure, with the chance of making twice as much if the price should go down and I shouldn't call for it. He'll be surprised, I guess, when it booms up to 95, as Mr. Brown said it would do, and Mr. Brown ought to know what's going to happen

in that particular stock, for I'll bet he's interested in it to the tune of a million or more."

Then Bob took up a Wall Street paper and began to look over the financial intelligence.

CHAPTER III.

THE LITTLE STOCKBROKER WINS.

Half-past twelve came around soon and Bob was thinking of going to lunch when the door opened and two young chaps, whom he recognized as clerks connected with an office on the opposite side of the corridor, walked in.

One had a smooth face and the other was growing an incipient mustache, which he watched with great care, as he thought it made him look manly.

Both had amused themselves by making fun of the little stockbroker, on the quiet, of course, and, believing him an easy mark, had decided to work a joke off on him, so that they could have a good laugh over it in their own office.

"Mister Somers, I believe?" said the chap with the mustache.

His tone, and the grin on his face, warned Bob that there was something in the wind, and he eyed them sharply.

"Yes, that's my name. What can I do for you?" he said.

"You're a stockbroker."

"That's my business."

"I should like to leave an order with you for 1,000 shares of the Huckleberry Railroad Preferred."

There was no such stock on the market, and Bob knew it.

"Very well," he said, quietly. "Do you wish to buy the stock outright or on the usual margin?"

"You can buy it for me on margin," chuckled the young man, fondling his mustache.

"Have you brought a certified check for \$10,000 to put up a security?"

"No, but I'll write you a check if you have a blank one, and my friend will certify it."

"I'm afraid you are too young to have a bank account. Commercial banks don't accept boys as depositors."

"Who are you calling a boy?" demanded the visitor, angrily.

"I should say you are one from your looks and your actions."

"Do you mean to insult me?" said the chap, indignantly.

"I hardly think it would be possible, my juvenile friend," replied Bob.

The joke appeared to be going the wrong way, and the other young man began to chuckle over the predicament his companion had got himself into.

"I suppose you think you're smart?" sneered the insulted one.

"It doesn't take much smartness to deal with a chap of your caliber," replied the little stockholder, coolly.

"How dare you use such language to me?"

"I always address a person according to his comprehension. You appear to be one of those overgrown kids who imagine they are men because a few hairs have sprouted on

their upper lip. What you need is a nurse to keep you from making a monkey of yourself in the presence of men."

"I've a great mind to smash you in the face," cried the visitor, in a rage.

"I wouldn't, sonny, you might over exert yourself, and that would be dangerous to one of your delicate constitution."

That was more than the visitor could stand, and he made an attempt to slap Bob in the face.

The little stockbroker caught his wrist in a vise-like grip and twisted it.

"Oh, oh! you're hurting me," cried the caller, for the pain was considerable and took the starch out of him.

"Sorry, but I don't intend to let you go till you get down on your knees and beg my pardon for coming in here and trying to make a fool of me."

"I'll never——"

Bob gave his arm another twist that brought the tears into his eyes and another howl from his lips.

"Let my arm go, will you?"

"Not until you do as I say."

"I won't."

Bob gave him another dose of the same medicine.

"You'll break my arm. Oh, heaven, don't, please don't. The bone will snap."

"Get down on your knees, then. Be quick about it."

Fairly crying from pain the visitor sank down on one knee.

"That's right. Now say you're sorry for acting like a ten-year-old kid. Say it or——"

"I'm sorry," blurted the demoralized visitor.

"And you won't do it again?"

"No, no."

"Say you beg my pardon."

"I beg your pardon," almost whimpered the chap.

"Now you can go," said the little stockbroker, releasing him. "Let this be a lesson to you. I was dead on to you both when you came in here. I know you work in Benson's office across the corridor, and that your object in coming in was to be funny. Well, this office isn't a good place for practical jokes, as I guess you realize now. I wish you both good-day."

The chap with the mustache was only too glad to make his escape, rubbing and fondling his wrenched arm with great solicitude.

As soon as his visitors had departed Bob put on his hat and went to lunch, chuckling at having turned the game back on the would-be jokers.

That afternoon A. & C. dropped to 80, and Mr. Bunce laughed to himself.

"That \$4,100 is as good as in my pocket. That boy stockbroker is easy. I'm sorry I didn't try to work him before. The price may go still lower, so I won't bother about putting \$80,000 into it. The chances are I won't need to buy it at all, for he'll never call on me for it the way things look."

Next morning A. & C. opened at 79 3-4, and Broker Bunce rubbed his hands once more.

"This deal with my young friend next door is just like finding money," he said. "Maybe I can work those Red Jacket shares off on him yet."

Bunce would have liked to tell his friends about his snap, but he was too shrewd.

He knew it would be a signal for others to make a line for the little stockbroker, and he wished to nurse the good thing he thought he had corraled.

Maybe in the long run he would be able to quietly clean Bob Somers out.

The milk of human kindness certainly flowed to a considerable extent in Mr. Bunce's veins.

The fact that A & C. had gone off 2 1-4 points inside of twenty-four hours did not worry the little stockbroker in the least.

He had perfect confidence in Mr. Brown's tip, and felt assured that it would turn out all right in the end.

He wondered if Mr. Bunce had delayed buying.

If he had he was now in a position to double his profit on the deal.

"He ought to make a pretty good thing out of it, too," thought Bob. "No doubt he thinks that I have put myself in a hole, and that he will reap all the benefit. He'll have another think coming later on."

When he went to lunch that day he met Will Winship for the first time since the accident in front of the building.

"Hello, Bob, I see you're still alive and kicking," he said.

"I'm alive, but I'm not kicking about anything," returned the little stockbroker, cheerfully.

"How did you make out with Mr. Brown? I saw you go off with him. Did he present you with a million as an evidence of his appreciation of your daring effort in his behalf?"

"Not that I'm aware of."

"He gave you something handsome, didn't he?"

"He put me on to a pretty good thing."

"What was it?"

"He said if I'd load up on Bologna Sausage I'm make a raft of money, so I have loaded up."

"Don't be funny. Did he give you a fat check for saving his life?"

"No, he didn't offer me such a thing. If he had I should have refused it."

"What, refused a check!"

"Yes. I am not accepting money for such a service."

"You're foolish. Nobody refuses money in Wall Street."

"We won't argue the matter. Where are you bound?"

"To the Exchange."

"Then I won't detain you, sonny. Run along; I'm going in here."

Next morning A. & C. opened at 79 1-4.

The insiders were evidently depressing the price to shake out the stock.

That's the way Bob figured, and he was right.

About noon it went up to 80.

Broker Bunce, noting the rise, concluded to buy at that price.

He walked leisurely over to the Exchange, but when he got there he found that it had gone up to 82.

He was disgusted, and hung around waiting for it to drop again.

It did drop to 81 1-2, and almost immediately jumped to 82 1-2.

Then it fell to 81 3-4.

He offered to buy 1,000 shares at that price, but nobody responded.

The syndicate had practically cornered the available supply.

While he was trying to get it a certain broker rushed it up to 85.

That meant a loss of \$1,000 to Bunch on his deal, and he was very angry.

"I was a fool not to buy it when it was below 80," he muttered. "However, if that boy doesn't call on me to deliver before the time limit, it may go down again."

That was the only comfort the broker could extract out of the situation.

He hung around the A. & C. pole, waiting to see if it would decline.

Instead of which it went to 86.

That represented the loss of another \$1,000 to him, and he looked as if the milk of human kindness in his system had turned sour.

He didn't believe the price would go much higher, but he was afraid a demand would be made on him by the little stockbroker for the stock at 84.

Bob, however, had no such thoughts.

The option still had seven days to run, and before the time limit had expired he guessed the price would be up in the 90s.

Bunce was on pins and needles up to three o'clock, when the Exchange closed for the day with A. & C. roosting at 87.

He returned to his office, feeling greatly disgruntled.

The boy stockbroker was \$3,000 ahead of the game, while he was that much to the bad.

"I believe somebody tipped that young rascal off to what was going to happen," he told himself, as he glared at the papers on his desk. "Who'd have thought such a stock as A. & C. would go up to 87. Suppose it should go to 90 to-morrow?"

The very idea of such a thing gave Bunce a fit.

"I hate to have a boy get the bulge on me, and I thought I was going to do him, too. It's enough to make a saint swear."

Mr. Bunce wasn't a saint, and it is quite possible he may have used some strong language, but there is no record of it.

Next day A. & C. opened at 87 1-8, and then dropped to 85.

Bunce began to breathe easier.

He was on the floor at the time, and waited to see it go lower.

When it began to recover, he hastily offered 85 1-2 for 1,000 shares.

Nobody took him up, much to his surprise.

It went to 85 3-4, and he offered 86, but without result.

He then noticed that the broker who was bidding hardly had an offer, and so to his discomfiture he saw the price go up to 90.

At noon it was 92, and at two o'clock 96 1-2.

Bob, who kept in touch with the market, concluded that it was time to call for the stock, for he had a profit of \$10,000 in sight, and it was already above the figure Mr. Brown had indicated that he had better sell at.

Bunce had long since woke up to the fact that a corner

had been worked in A. & C., and that the syndicate behind it had secured all the stock that could be got.

When he found he couldn't get it he was a wild man.

At last he received Bob's demand for the shares called for by his option, and he didn't know what to do.

He tried to borrow the stock from one of his friends, but nobody he knew professed to have any of it.

He couldn't deliver, and was compelled to ask Bob what he would settle for in cash.

"Twelve thousand dollars," replied the little stockbroker.

"What!" roared Bunce. "Why, at the market price I only owe you \$10,250."

"I'm letting you down easy," said Bob, coolly, "for it's going to par to-morrow."

"How do you know that?"

"Never mind how I know it. I'll settle with you now at \$12,000. To-morrow it's likely to cost you anywhere from \$3,000 to \$5,000 more."

Bunce squealed like a stuck pig.

He declared that it was sheer robbery, and offered Bob \$11,000.

"I have only one price," replied the boy.

Bunce seized his check-book, dashed off a check for \$12,000, and flung it at the little stockbroker.

"Now give me my option," he cried. "If I sell another may I be——"

"Hold on, Mr. Bunce, you forget to include my deposit. I want another check for \$4,100."

The broker had to give it, and he said some hard words while he wrote it out.

"Thank you, Mr. Bunce," replied Bob, politely. "I'll wish you good-afternoon."

He left, went to the bank and cashed the two checks.

When he got back to the office with the money he found that A. & C. had gone down to 89.

An unexpected slump had set in, and Bob chuckled as he thought how mad Mr. Bunce would be when he saw the decline on his ticker.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LITTLE STOCKBROKER IS INVITED TO JOIN A POOL.

"That was a fine haul," said Bob, counting the bills on his table. "Twelve thousand dollars added to my little pile in less than a week. If this luck keeps on I'll soon have money to burn myself. Still I wouldn't have made it if I hadn't saved Mr. Brown's life, in recognition of which service he gave me the tip which has turned out so handsomely. It is not improbable that he'll do something else for me, for he promised to keep me in mind. It's a fine thing to be in the good books of a millionaire, particularly if you're a stockbroker and he's a big operator. There are many chances for him to give you a boost. Gracious! but Mr. Bunce was hot under the collar over that option. And I can't say I blame him much. Still he was a fool not to have bought the stock when he made the deal. He would have made at least \$2,000 instead of being obliged to cough up \$12,000. I dare say it will be a lesson to him."

Bob felt so good at having put it over Broker Bunce that

a day or two later he called on Mr. Brown and gave him a full account of the deal.

The operator laughed heartily at the discomfiture of the trader.

"You turned the trick on him very nicely," he said. "You're a pretty smart boy. I must tell that to my broker. He'll consider it a great joke, and I dare say when the Street learns about it they'll give Mr. Bunce the laugh."

Two or three days later the news was around among the traders, and it afforded the majority a good laugh, for Mr. Bunce was by no means a favorite among the Wall Street fraternity, as his crafty tactics were not relished by the brokers generally.

It was generally believed that he had intended to get the better of the boy, and the fact that the little stockbroker had over-reached him was as good as a play.

When Bunce discovered that the facts were out, and that he was the butt of the Street, he was wild.

He rushed into Bob's office and raised Cain with the boy for giving the facts of the deal away.

"I only told one gentleman about it, Mr. Bunce. It isn't my fault if he told somebody else, and that somebody spread the news," said the boy.

"It is your fault," roared the angry broker. "You had no business to tell anybody. You've made me the butt of the Street, and I sha'n't hear the last of it for some time."

"I'm sorry you're angry about it. Allow me to apologize."

"Bah! What good is your apology now that the mischief is done?"

"Well, I regret——"

"Go to the dickens with your regrets," and Bunce bounced out of his office as mad as a hatter.

"Great Scott!" chuckled Bob, "if Mr. Bunce don't look out he'll rupture a blood vessel or sprain an artery. I'll bet he's awfully down on me. I dare say he'll try to get back at me some way. I must be on my guard, though I can't imagine what kind of a job he can put up on me."

At that moment there came a knock at his door.

"Come in," said the little stockbroker.

The door opened and admitted a gentleman.

Bob recognized him as a broker whose office was on that floor, though he did not know him personally.

He was an elderly man, and had a pronounced foreign accent, which caused many of the younger traders to make fun at him behind his back.

"I pelief I vas addressing Mr. Somers, who vas known as de little stockproker?"

"Yes, sir; take a seat. You are Mr. Moses Blumm, I think?"

"Dat ish quite right. I am Moses Blumm. I have heard a little story apout you and Mr. Bunce vat tickle me a great deal. I said I vill make the acquaintance of so smardt a poy vat can get der pest of so shrewd a shentleman as Mr. Bunce."

"Well, I'm glad to know you," said Bob.

"You bought an options of Mr. Bunce, I hear at two points advance?"

"Yes, sir."

"You do much pus'ness in dat lines?"

"No, sir. That was the first I ever bought."

"Vell, vell, you don't say! For vhy did not Mr. Bunce protect dat options?"

"I couldn't tell you, Mr. Blumm. I'm not a mind reader."

"You vas not a mind reader? I should hope not my tear poy. If you vas one of dem kind of peoples vat vas apable to see vat vas coming you vould pe very dangerous in Vall Street. You vould make all de moneys and dere vould pe none left for der prokers. It ish true dat you catch Mr. Bunce for \$12,000, eh?"

"If you heard that I won't deny it."

"Vhy should you deny it if it was true? Vell, vell, vat a clever poy you are!"

"Oh, it was just a matter of luck, Mr. Blumm. I might not turn such a trick again in a hundred years."

"Maype so, maype so; but Mr. Bunce ish not vat ish called an easy mark. How did you do it?"

"Well, you see I had an idea that A. & C. was going to take on a boom, and as Mr. Bunce was anxious to do a little business with me, I proposed the option to him at a two point advance, and he took me up."

"Vell, vell, he took you up and it cost him \$12,000 to settle. Vat a shoke dat ish on Mr. Bunce. I subbose dat you had a tip or you vould not haf been villing to pay two points more dan der market?"

"You can suppose it if you want to. I'm not saying whether I had a pointer or not."

"Vell, you must haf known vat vas going to happen."

"Oh, I'm a pretty good guesser, Mr. Blumm."

"I see you vas pretty close, my poy. Dat vas a goot principle to go py. Are you paying anyt'ings to-day?"

"Have you got something that you want to unload?" laughed Bob.

"I haf some mining stocks vat I vould like to get rid of, but I vouldn't offer dem to a smardt poy like you."

"Mr. Bunce tried to sell me a few thousand shares of Red Jacket."

"Red Shacket? And you vouldn't puy dem?"

"Why should I? It's only a prospect."

"A brospect! Some brospectes make very goot speculations. Perhaps you nefer heard dat story apout dose two young men vat vas asked by a shentlemans to puy stock in de Calumet and Hecla mine vhen dat company vas first formed apout tirty years ago. One of dem——"

"Oh, yes, I know all about it. One bought and the other didn't, and the chap who bought made a million or more out of his investment. Half the mining promoters are using that yarn in their prospectuses. It's getting to be a chestnut."

"Vell, vell, so you know all apout it? Vat a smardt poy you vas. It vas a true story, but such t'ings don't happen efery day."

"I'll bet they don't. Do you think Red Jacket is going to pan out into a producer?"

"Listen. I tell you somet'ings apout dat Red Shacket vat is a secrets. I shust learned it to-day from a private letter vat I got from Goldfield. De owners of dat mine haf discovered a rich lode vich vill assay \$500 to de ton."

"Really," replied Bob, with no great enthusiasm. "If it is true it ought to give the stock a boost in price."

"It vill, my poy, py and py, vhen de news gets out."

"I suppose on the strength of your inside information

you bought all the Red Jacket stock you could afford to pay for?"

"I bought some, but my moneys ish tied up in vun vay or another, and I can't puy all vat I vould like. Mine pus'ness ish in dat conditions dat I vould pe taking shances to porrow moneys on call. I says to mineself vat I shall do apout dis Red Shacket stock vat I vould make moneys on if I could puy it? De only plan dat I see vas to get some one dat vill go in vith me and share de profits. Vell, den I t'ink of you, de little stockproker. You haf yust made some moneys out of a smardt deal. You vill vant to make some more if you see de vays to do it vithout too much risk. So I said to mineself I vill call on dis poy and talk it over vith him. Dat is the reason I vas here. Vat you t'ink apoud it?"

"Then your object is to make a kind of pool arrangement with me to buy more of this Red Jacket stock?" said Bob.

"Dat ish it."

"You say you have a letter from somebody in Goldfield stating that the owners of the mine have discovered a rich lode on their property?"

The broker nodded.

"Did you bring that letter with you?"

"I haf it in mine pocket."

"Let me see it."

Mr. Blumm produced it and passed it to the little stockbroker.

Bob read it, after looking at the envelope and noting that it bore the Goldfield post-mark.

It stated exactly what Mr. Blum had told him, going into certain details concerning the discovery, and was signed by a man named Jacob Reece.

It might be a true statement of fact, and it might not—Bob had no means of deciding that.

"You see it vas shenuine—dat it come from Goldfield. De envelope has de Goldfield post-mark," said Mr. Blumm.

Bob nodded, but at the moment it struck him that, in point of fact, the letter might not have come in that envelope.

It would be a simple matter to substitute for the original enclosure a letter written, say in Mr. Blumm's office.

It also occurred to Bob that he did not see how, if the visitor's proposition was an honest one, Mr. Blumm was going to gain much by forming this proposed pool.

Apparently he was merely putting a good chance to make money in Bob's way.

Why should he do this?

"Suppose I go into this pool, do I handle my own money and hold the shares bought with the cash I advance?"

"Dat ish not the idea," said Mr. Blumm. "I haf 50,000 shares vich cost me \$12,500. You vill gif me \$12,500 and I vill puy 50,000 more shares. I vill hold de certificates in mine safe. Vhen de price takes a shump, after de news comes out, I vill sell de stock and den ve vill divide de profits. I shall pe surprised if ve don't each make from \$40,000 to \$50,000 profit out of de deal."

"I suppose you propose to charge me a percentage on my share?"

"Nottings more dan mine regular commission for puying and selling—dat vill pe maype \$1,500 at de outside."

"I will consider the matter and let you know, Mr. Blumm," said Bob.

The visitor looked disappointed.

"Vhy not settle der matters now? You vill not get such a shance soon again."

"Because I never go into any business propositions half cocked."

"You haf read de letter and seen dat it vas shenuine. Vat more do you vant?"

Bob, however, declined to commit himself at the interview, and Mr. Blumm was obliged to take his leave without the matter being settled.

Bob had a strong suspicion that the Red Jack proposition was a scheme to separate him from \$12,500.

As soon as his visitor went away he put on his hat and called on a big mining broker with whom he was acquainted.

He told him about the proposition made to him by Broker Blumm.

"Don't touch it. Red Jacket is dropping out of the list of good prospects. It will be down to ten cents in less than a week. The Curb traders know this and are trying to work off whatever shares they have at the present price on anybody who will bite. Personally I wouldn't give a dime for the stock," said the broker.

Bob knew this man's judgment could be relied on, so when he returned to his office after lunch he notified Mr. Blumm that he had decided not to invest in the Red Jacket pool.

CHAPTER V.

THE LITTLE STOCKBROKER'S MISSION.

It was about this time that a coalition was formed against Mr. Brown, the operator, the object of which was to force him to give up the control of the United Traction Company, and with it the presidency.

Mr. Brown had been in control of the road for several years.

He did not own a majority of the shares of the road's stock, but with the holdings of his personal friends, and others who had confidence in his management, he had been able to dictate the line's policy.

The men who were now opposing him were doing so wholly from interested motives.

They had no intention of adding to the efficiency of the road if they got their hooks in, though they made a big bluff that they would.

Their real purpose was to form a holding company, take over the traction line, and some minor independent branches that didn't amount to a hill of beans, and then place on the market a new issue of stock largely in excess of the real valuations of the combined properties.

This kind of business had been done with great success many times in New York City, and the high financiers back of the project anticipated making several millions for themselves if the scheme went through.

But they had a foe worthy of their steel in Brown.

They would have gladly taken him in and divided with him if he would have come in.

But when he was approached on the matter weeks before,

he had plainly let it be known that he was opposed to such financial highway robbery.

It was robbery to issue securities to the value of \$1.50 for every dollar's worth of property—property, too, that was constantly deteriorating through daily operation.

The conspirators—and that was a worthy name for them—didn't see it in that light.

They were out for the mighty dollar.

They intended, if successful, to engage distinguished legal talent to twist the law into loopholes that they might take advantage of, and to keep them out of jail in case the newspapers got after them and brought about a State investigation.

With Brown and his friends against them they had a stiff fight on their hands, but they were out to win—by fair means if they could; by foul if they had to resort to such dangerous methods.

The newspapers soon got on to the fight, which on the surface seemed merely the efforts of an opposition clique to get control of United Traction.

One or two of the leading papers were subsidized by the opposition, and their reports of the situation naturally favored the people who paid them.

Brown bought no newspaper, and contented himself with fighting the battle out in the Stock Exchange.

One morning Mr. Brown sent for Bob Somers to come to his office.

The little stockbroker responded promptly.

"I've got an important commission for you to execute for me, Somers," said the operator. "I cannot employ a regular broker, for reasons that it is unnecessary for me to explain. You are a boy, it is true, and rather inexperienced as yet in the ways of the Street, but I believe you are unusually smart. At any rate you are unknown to the men I am working against, and that is half the battle at least. A certain man named Torres, living on the Connecticut shore—here is his name in full, and his address—has 100 shares of United Traction which the present high price is tempting him to sell. I do not think the opposition has got wind of his purpose yet, but there are a score or two of eyes watching every move I make. I want to steal a march on them, and to that end I rely on you. Will you undertake this commission?"

"Willingly, and I promise to do my best," replied Bob.

"That is all I ask. Now I will give you your instructions."

Half an hour later the little stockbroker returned to his own office.

After attending to a few things he locked up and took a train uptown.

Getting out at Forty-second street, he walked to the Grand Central depot and made inquiries about the next train on the Shore Line that went at least as far as New London.

He was not bound for New London, but a small town called Blackhall, close to the Connecticut River, about fifteen miles this side of that city.

He was told that there was a Boston express going out in ten minutes, but he would have to change to a local at New Haven in order to continue his journey.

"How far is Blackhall from New Haven?" he asked.

"Fifty miles or so in a direct line, but quite a bit more

by rail. It's on the eastern shore of the Connecticut River," said the agent, who then turned away to serve other passengers.

"Give me a ticket to New Haven," said Bob, and he got it.

He felt hungry when in due course he reached that city, for it was about one o'clock, and he ate a good lunch at the station restaurant.

A local train for New London, that made all stops, was slated to go out in thirty minutes, and soon as it was ready to receive passengers Bob boarded it.

Inside of two hours he got out at Blackhall station.

John Torres, the man he came to see, lived on a good-sized island at the mouth of the Connecticut River, within a short distance of the shore.

Bob made his way to a boat landing and found no difficulty in getting over to the island.

The boatman knew Mr. Torres, and where his house was, and he gave Bob the directions that would take him there by the most direct route.

Bob noticed that another boat landed two well-dressed men at the small dock where he stepped ashore.

The little stockbroker paid no attention to them, but hurried off to complete, if possible, his errand, for it was already five o'clock.

The gentlemen followed the same route he took, but he outstripped them, and entered the grounds where Mr. Torres lived.

Ringling the bell he asked for that gentleman, and was shown into his sitting-room.

When Mr. Torres appeared Bob lost no time in introducing himself, and the object of his visit.

"The market price of United Traction when I left New York was 125. I am authorized to offer you 125," said Bob, briskly.

"I had a message over the long-distance 'phone apprising me of your coming, and making the offer of 125. I accepted it, and said I would deliver the certificates on receipt of a certified check for \$12,500, which I was informed you were bringing with you," said Mr. Torres.

"Yes, sir. Here is the check," replied Bob, producing it.

"Very good. I will get the certificate."

While he was out of the room the door-bell rang and the servant appeared.

When Mr. Torres came back with the certificate the maid announced two gentlemen callers.

"Who are they, Marie?"

"Strangers, sir," she answered.

"I will see them in a few minutes," he said.

The gentleman handed Bob the certificate.

The little broker glanced over it to see that it was all right, and finding that it was, passed over the check.

That concluded his business, and the boy said he would not longer detain the gentleman.

Marie was called and showed Bob out.

"I didn't have much trouble over this little commission," thought the boy, as he walked slowly back to the landing.

There happened to be no boat there when he arrived, and he sat down on the string-piece to wait.

It was coming on dusk now, and Bob wondered if he would be able to get back to New York that night.

While he was thinking the matter over the two well-dressed men came walking rapidly down to the wharf.

He knew they were the visitors who had been announced while he was closing the sale of the certificate with Mr. Torres, and he had a strong suspicion that they were emissaries of the opposition, and had come on the same errand he had.

He congratulated himself on the fact that if such were the case he had got in ahead of them.

They looked hard at him as they came up, and then stepped to one side and talked together in a low tone.

Finally they came over to him.

"Waiting to get across?" asked one of them.

"Yes, sir," replied Bob, pleasantly.

"So are we. If a boatman doesn't come pretty soon we shall miss the train for New Haven. You look like a New York boy."

"I am," admitted Bob.

"Down here on business?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I suppose you are intending taking the same train we do?"

"Very likely, if you're going to take the next one."

A boatman finally came over, but it was dark when they reached the main shore.

"Let us cut across here. We'll reach the station quicker," said one of the gentlemen, taking Bob by the arm and drawing him up a narrow lane.

The little stockbroker had no suspicion of his real object.

The speaker's companion followed after Bob.

The lane carried them to another part of the shore instead of the railroad station.

"Why, we've come back to the shore," said Bob.

"Yes," replied one of the men, dropping the mask, "we brought you here to ask you to hand over that 100-share certificate of United Traction stock you purchased of Mr. Torres."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the little stockbroker.

"Is it necessary for me to repeat my words? We want that certificate. Hand it over or we'll take it from you," said the man, resolutely.

"So, you are footpads and not gentlemen," replied the boy.

"It doesn't matter who we are. We want that stock, and we're going to have it, understand?"

"Two to one are rather strong odds, but you'll have to take it if you want it. It's in my charge, and I don't intend to give it up."

"Then we'll take it," and the speaker reached for the boy.

Quick as a wink Bob evaded his clutch by jumping to one side.

"Try to escape us, would you? Don't let him pass, Joe."

He rushed at Bob in the semi-darkness.

The boy side-stepped and smashed him square in the jaw.

Then he started along the shore at a run.

Both men followed in hot pursuit.

CHAPTER VI.

IN TROUBLE AND OUT.

The darkness favored Bob, and as long as the shore was unobstructed ahead of him he had the advantage.

Unexpectedly his foot encountered a stone imbedded in the sand and he pitched forward on his face.

Before he could get up the two pursuers were on him.

While one held him down and said "Search his pockets, Joe," the other went through the little stockbroker's clothes.

He found the envelope containing the certificate.

"I've got it," he said. "Now what are we to do with this chap? We can't let him go, for he'd follow us and make trouble."

"Tie his hands behind him with this handkerchief while I hold him," replied the other.

This was done.

"Now tie his ankles with your own handkerchief and we'll leave him here."

The man addressed as Joe did so, and Bob realized that he was helpless.

"Better dump him into the bushes," said Joe.

They picked the boy up by his shoulders and heels, swung him once and then let go of him.

There was a swish, as the bushes yielded to his flying body, and then a crash.

Bob had not landed in the bushes, but on top of a barrel beyond them, which collapsed under his weight.

"He struck something," said Joe.

"Never mind; come on."

They left the spot, and Bob lay alone in the wreck of the barrel.

The men made a mistake in treating their prisoner so roughly.

The shock of the contact with the barrel loosened the handkerchief around the wrists of the little stockbroker, and as he had a small hand, as soon as he recovered from his brief daze, he drew one of them out of limbo.

The other easily followed.

He then released his ankles and was free.

"I'm lucky," he muttered, getting on his feet. "Now to follow those chaps."

He lost no time in following the trail of the men who had robbed him.

He was satisfied they were not footpads, but agents of the opposition bunch.

Finding that Mr. Torres had sold him the certificate, they had determined to get it away from him.

They had succeeded, but Bob didn't mean that their success should prevail.

He intended to give them a surprise at the station, where he had no doubt they were headed for.

He found the lane through which he had been decoyed, and started back through it.

Suddenly he heard the fierce barking of a dog ahead of him.

Then exclamations of fright and dismay, which he judged came from the men he was after.

Through the gloom he saw two flying figures coming his way.

There seemed no doubt that they were being chased by a watch-dog belonging to the nearby farm.

Bob had no wish to get mixed up in the trouble, so he hastily climbed over the fence, chuckling at the mischance which had overtaken the men who had robbed him.

One of the men passed at top speed.

His companion was not so good a runner, and the dog was close behind him.

Just as he got abreast of Bob the animal sprang at him and his teeth caught his coat.

The frightened man yelled "Murder!" and tried to shake him off.

The dog had a good grip and wouldn't let go.

In his excitement the man tore off his coat and dropped it with the animal, then resumed his headlong flight.

The animal did not follow him, but devoted his attention to the coat, which he bit and clawed at viciously.

Bob kept as still as a mouse and watched him.

Finally the amusement palled on the dog and he seemed to recollect that the man had got away.

He immediately put his nose to the ground, and with a growling bark resumed the pursuit.

Bob waited till his yelps sounded at a distance and then returned to the lane.

He picked up the torn coat, stuck it under his arm and resumed his way.

He regarded it as a piece of evidence against the man to whom it belonged.

He might be able to find something in the pockets that would give him a clue to his identity.

If he did it was likely that Mr. Brown would make it hot for the party.

Bob reached the road to the station all right and in a short time got there.

The train was almost due he ascertained from the agent.

He employed the time in examining the dilapidated coat.

He almost gave a shout of joy when he found the envelope with the United Traction certificate in it.

It had not been injured and he quickly transferred it to his pocket.

There were several papers in the coat that seemed to connect the owner with a certain brokerage firm in New York.

There was a handkerchief in the side pocket with an initial on it.

The label of a well-known custom tailor was sewn under the collar, and directly under it three initials worked in silk, one of which corresponded with the initials on the handkerchief.

Bob secured a newspaper and wrapped the coat up in it. By that time the train came rolling into the station.

He got aboard of the last car and thrust his head out of the window to see if the two men would show up.

He saw no sign of them until the train started on, when he saw a coatless man, followed by his companion, rush frantically on to the platform of the station too late to catch the train.

"They're left," laughed Bob. "They'll not get back to the city to-night."

He shut down the window, very well satisfied with the way things had turned out.

He bought a magazine of the train newsman, and read till the train reached New Haven.

Here he got out and shortly afterward connected with the night express from Boston, due in New York at half-past ten.

Reaching the Grand Central Station, he took an elevated train for Harlem, and in due course arrived at the swell Seventh avenue apartment-house where he lived with his parents and two sisters.

Next morning at ten o'clock he appeared at Mr. Brown's office with the bundle.

The operator had just arrived, and the little stockbroker was admitted to his private room at once.

"There's the certificate, Mr. Brown," he said, laying the envelope containing it on his desk.

"Good," said the operator. "I telephoned Mr. Torres after you had gone to try and make it easier for you. Did he mention the fact?"

"Yes, sir."

"I was a little nervous over the result, as I learned that the opposition had sent a couple of agents down by the same train you took. I suppose you did not run across them. You wouldn't have known them anyway."

"I met them all right. They reached the landing on the island at the same time I did. They did not suspect that my presence there had any connection with the business they were bound on, and so took their time in getting to Mr. Torres' house. I didn't know them, but as I wasn't taking any chances of a complication, I hustled on ahead of them, reached my destination and had concluded the business when they were announced."

"Excellent!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, rubbing his hands.

"They saw me leave, and when they found out, as they naturally did, that I had secured the certificate, I guess they were mad."

"Very likely," chuckled the operator.

"They returned to the wharf while I was waiting for a boat to take me across to the main shore, and entered into conversation with me."

"They did, eh?"

"Yes, and when a boatman finally carried us over they put up a job on me to get hold of the certificate."

"The dickens they did!" ejaculated Mr. Brown. "It is evident that they slipped up, for here is the certificate."

"You shall hear, sir, how the affair turned out."

Bob then related all that had happened to him, describing how the men captured the certificate, fired him bound into the bushes, and how he had escaped and followed them.

He then told how their encounter with the savage dog had been the means of turning the tables on them, and enabled him to get back the certificate.

"There's the coat which I brought along as evidence against one of them at any rate," said the little stockbroker, pointing at the bundle. "I guess you'll find a clue to the owner in it."

Mr. Brown opened the bundle and examined the coat.

He looked at the papers and grinned.

Bob showed him the initial on the handkerchief, and

pointed to the other initials on the inner side of the collar.

"I know the man to whom this belongs," said Mr. Brown, "and he will hear from me. I also know who his companion was. I must say that you managed things pretty well, Somers. I promised you \$50 for this job, the same to include your commission. I'll double it."

He wrote out his check for \$100 and handed it to the little stockbroker.

"You have proved yourself to be a smart boy, and I shall not forget to put something else in your way. Good-morning."

"Good-morning, Mr. Brown," and Bob left.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LITTLE STOCKBROKER HAS A FAIR CALLER.

It was Saturday morning and Bob had nothing particular on his hands.

He read the financial papers and watched the quotations as they came out on his ticker till noon came and the Exchange closed.

He looked out of his window and smiled at one of the pretty stenographers in the office opposite with whom he occasionally carried on a kind of mild flirtation.

Then he leaned back in his chair and wondered what he would do with himself that afternoon.

Half-past twelve got around and Bob concluded he would shut up shop.

He was about to close his desk when there came a timid kind of tap on the door.

"Come in," said the little stockbroker.

The door opened and a vision of female loveliness stood in the opening.

Bob sprang to his feet and invited the fair one to come in.

She did so in a hesitating way.

"I beg your pardon," she said, glancing around. "Mr. Somers is not in."

"Yes, he is, miss. I am Mr. Somers. This is my office. Take a seat and let me know your name, and how I can serve you."

"Are you really a broker?" she asked, in a doubtful tone.

"I really am a broker."

"Pardon me for thinking—that is, you look——"

"I look young, is that it? You mustn't mind my looks. They don't always figure. It's brains that count, and I think I have my share. Sit down and let me know whom I have the honor of addressing."

"My name is Miss Grant. I wanted some advice about some shares of stock."

"Certainly. I am pretty well posted. It's my business to be. What is the name of the stock you want information about?"

"The Santa Fe Central."

"Indeed! You are fortunate if you have some of that. Within this week it has jumped from 60 to 75, not by rea-

son of any manipulation of the stock jobbers, but because the Supreme Court of the United States has rendered a decision favorable to it in a suit against a rival road which has been before the courts for a matter of ten years. This advance in value may not be looked upon as a brief rise subject to a subsequent slump, but a solid jump into its rightful place in the railroad world. In all likelihood it will go higher."

The young lady regarded Bob with surprise and respect.

"You appear to be well informed?" she said

"It is my business to keep abreast of everything in my line," replied the little stockbroker.

"It is very kind of you to give me this information."

"Don't mention it. There is no reason why I shouldn't when you asked me. May I ask how many shares of Santa Fe Central you have?"

Five hundred. They were left to me by my father, who was one of the constructors of the road. My uncle and guardian had charge of the five certificates until last night, when I secured possession of them. I shall be of age, that is, eighteen," with a smile, "next week, when his authority over me and my property ceases. By accident I learend that he intended to take advantage of the rise and sell them, but to render an accounting at 60, pretending that he had disposed of them the day prior to the advance in the price. By doing this he expected to retain the difference himself, and thus cheat me out of over \$7,000."

"That is a rough thing for an uncle and guardian to do," said Bob.

"Indeed it is; but Mr. Penrose is not over scrupulous in his dealings. In his accounting he intends to charge me with many things I have never had."

"But if you can show that you never got them, how can he——"

"He has secured vouchers in some way. I found a bundle of them."

The speaker opened her handbag and took out first the five certificates of Santa Fe Central and then a small bundle of bills.

"I think I can trust you, Mr. Somers. At any rate, I must trust somebody for a few days."

"I hope you can, Miss Grant. If I can be of any service to you, command me," replied Bob.

"Well, my uncle has probably discovered the loss of these certificates, and he is sure to miss the vouchers when he looks for them. I want you to keep both in your safe for me."

"I will do so with pleasure."

"I will pay any reasonable charge for your services to me as soon as my uncle has made an honest settlement with me through the court."

"Don't worry about the charge, Miss Grant. There will be no charge for merely doing you this small favor."

"I couldn't think of having you do something for me without paying you. That isn't business. I wish you to act as my friend in this matter, and protect my interests, and of course you can't do this for nothing."

"But it is no trouble for me to keep your papers and the certificates in my safe. I will give you a receipt for them."

Bob took a large envelope, put the certificates of Santa Fe Central into it and sealed it up.

He put the vouchers in an ordinary envelope and sealed that, too.

He wrote on both the nature of their contents, and added the words "Property of Miss Elsie Grant," after asking his visitor for her Christian name.

Then he opened his safe and put the envelopes in a pigeon hole.

"Now, Miss Grant, is there anything else I can do for you?"

"Nothing more, thank you. I will call perhaps next Thursday, and may then conclude to let you sell the stock for me, as I think I can use the money to better advantage than keeping it in that stock, and receiving no income from it."

"I think you can, too. It will be some time before the road pays a dividend on its stock, I imagine. When that pleasing time comes around it will advance close to par. It might pay you to hold the shares, that is if you have no immediate use for the money; otherwise it would be better to sell them and put your money in gilt-edge bonds, or first mortgages in real estate."

"If I decide to sell I will ask your advice as to the best kind of an investment I can make. You seem to be very smart, and I will have confidence in your judgment."

Bob bowed at the compliment, and assured his fair visitor that he would do the best he could for her.

The young lady smiled and rose from the chair.

"I will not take up any more of your time, Mr. Somers. I will say good-by until I call again," she said.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Grant. I will expect to see you Thursday," said Bob. "Permit me to see you to the elevator."

The little broker returned to his office much impressed by the beauty and sweetness of his visitor.

"I must know her better if I can," said Bob, as he put on his hat. "I hope she will decide to sell her stock, in which case it will be my pleasing duty to suggest a suitable investment for her funds. A young lady worth at least between \$35,000 and \$40,000 is a desirable acquaintance, not to mention her many personal charms, which are certainly of the first water."

Bob started for the door, when it opened and his friend Will, accompanied by a pretty girl, walked in.

"Hello, Bob, going home?"

"That was my intention," replied the little stockbroker.

"Then we caught you in time. Allow me to present you to my sister. Nellie, this is Bob Somers, the little stockbroker."

Bob bowed, and said he was glad to meet Miss Winship.

"Will has been promising me this introduction for a coon's age," laughed Bob. "I am glad to find that it has materialized at last."

"You can blame sis, for she wouldn't come over," replied Will, who lived in Brooklyn.

"Well, better late than never," said Bob. "Come in and sit down."

"You have a nice office, Mr. Somers," said the girl, looking around.

"Nice enough for a chap just starting out for himself," said Bob. "One of these days I hope to have a suite, like other brokers, and then it will be something like an office."

"That will happen when you have money to burn," grinned Will. "How's business?"

"Looking up."

"I wish I was in business for myself. It must be fine to be one's own boss."

"It is, when you're making money; otherwise a steady situation has its advantages. Haven't had your lunch, I suppose? Will you do me the honor of lunching with me?"

"We are going right home," said Miss Winship.

"Don't go till you have honored me with your company."

After some demur on the young lady's part she and Will agreed to become Bob's guest at a restaurant.

The three then adjourned to a Beaver street establishment, and the little stockbroker did the honors in a royal way.

Bob then walked with Will and his sister as far as the Brooklyn Bridge, where he parted from them and went home.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE IRATE MR. PENROSE.

On Monday morning Bob spent an hour at the Exchange, up in the visitors' gallery, to which he had a card of admission from his uncle, who was a well-known trader, with an office on New street.

He returned to his office about eleven.

On the floor in front of his door was a folded sheet of paper.

He picked it up, and on opening it found it contained the following note:

"FRIEND JOHN: I've just got on to a first-class tip. The Davis crowd, with a raft of money behind them, are buying up all the shares of O. & M. in sight. This is just the chance for you to make a haul. The stock is already getting scarce, but Bunce and Blumm have some of it which you ought to be able to corral at a slight advance on the market. I have bought all I can carry myself, and wish you luck.

Yours,
"F. M."

Bob entered his office, sat at his desk and read the note again.

"Looks like a genuine tip," he thought. "Looks as if Friend John while passing from Bunce's office to Blumm's, or vice versa, accidentally lost the note. Let me see what O. & M. is ruling at."

He looked over the tape, but though the Exchange had been in session for an hour and a half, there was no quotation of the stock.

Clearly no trading had been done in it in the board-room so far that morning.

He consulted the previous day's market report and saw that only 200 shares had exchanged hands the day before at 75.

"The syndicate must be doing all its buying on the quiet and have not yet tackled the open market," said the little stockbroker.

He pondered over the matter, half disposed to go around

to the little bank and get in on what appeared to be a good thing.

Finally he put on his hat and went around to see Mr. Brown.

That gentleman was very busy and could not be disturbed.

Bob did not care to wait an indefinite time, so he went to his uncle's office.

Showing him the note he asked him what he thought of it.

His uncle read it and then asked him how it came into his possession.

Bob explained.

"It may be all right, but I wouldn't advise you to take any chance on it," replied his uncle. "As you have lots of time you might watch the stock on your ticker and see what happens."

"I don't see why anybody should drop a false tip in front of my door," said the little stockbroker.

"I see Bunce's name is mentioned in it. Didn't you get the best of that trader on an option deal a little while ago?"

"Yes."

"Then he might have put that note there for you to find in order to steer you on to something you'd lose money in."

"That's true enough," said Bob, thoughtfully. "He'd do it quick enough I guess if he thought I'd bite. He's pretty sore on me."

On his way back to the office Bob concluded to call on Mr. Blumm.

He found the trader in and asked him if he had any O. & M.

"Yes, my poy. I have a t'ousand shares I can let you have for 75 1-2."

"Has anybody else called on you about this stock?"

"Anypody else? Let me see. Yes, dere vas a shentleman in here dis morning, but he wouldn't gif more dan 75 1-4, and I wouldn't sell at dat."

"But the market price is only 75."

"I know dat, but mine price ish 75 1-2."

Bob said he guessed he wouldn't buy, and started to leave.

"Vait a moment, mine poy," said Broker Blumm. "Suppose dat I say 75 3-8?"

"No," replied Bob. "That's no inducement."

"Vell, hold on. Seeing it ish you I vill let you haf dem at 75 1-4."

The little stockbroker shook his head.

"Vat, you vill not take dem at dat?"

"No," and Bob started for the door.

"Vait; I vill sell dem to you at 75 1-8, so dat you can make a good commission on de deal."

"I don't want the stock."

"For vhy you come in and ask den?"

"I thought maybe you was selling at the market."

"Vell, I sell you at de market; but I wouldn't do dat for anypody else."

"Well, I'll see you later about it," and Bob got out quick, satisfied that the note he had found at his door was a plant in which both brokers Bunce and Blumm were interested.

Half an hour later Blumm called on him.

"I vas vaiting for you to come and take dem O. & M. shares. I haf de certificates in mine pocket if you vant to pay for dem cash. If you haf not de moneys to do dat den I vill hold dem for you on de usual margin of ten per shent."

"The price has gone down to 74 3-4 since I saw you."

"Vell, dat ain't mine fault. I sell dem to you at dat price."

"I have concluded not to buy the stock now."

"Vat, you go pack on your vord!" ejaculated Blumm, much disappointed.

"Why, I didn't agree to buy the stock."

"Maype not, but you gif me dat impression, and I keep it for you."

"You haven't lost anything if you did keep it, I guess. I didn't tell you to hold it for me."

"Vell, you don't vant it?"

"Not to-day."

"Goot-day."

"One moment, Mr. Blumm. What happened to that rich lode which your correspondent informed you had been discovered in Red Jacket? I see the price of the stock has dropped to ten cents."

"I know nottings apout it."

"You must have lost money on the goods, for you told me you bought 50,000 shares at a quarter. If I'd gone in with you I'd have been out \$7,500."

"Vait. You vill see it go up py and py, and den you vill vish you had taken up mine proposition."

"Why I can buy 50,000 shares now for \$5,000, that's forty per cent. cheaper than you offered them to me."

"Vell, go puy dem if you t'ink you can get dem," and Mr. Blumm walked out.

When Bob got back to his office after lunch that day he found a tall, bony-looking, well-dressed man of perhaps fifty, standing outside his door.

He carried a book, an umbrella and a newspaper in his hands.

He was knocking lustily on the glass, and when Bob approached he turned his smoothly-shaven, sanctimonious-looking face on the boy.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?" asked the little stockbroker.

"I want to see Mr. Somers."

"That's my name," replied Bob, opening the door. "Step inside."

The gentleman followed him inside.

"Are you Robert Somers, stockbroker?" asked the visitor.

"Yes, sir."

"Huh! You're only a boy."

"Yes, sir. What can I do for you?"

"Is that your handwriting?" asked the man, exhibiting the receipt Bob had given Miss Elsie Grant.

"Yes, sir. I gave that receipt to Miss Grant."

"Take it back and give me the certificates of Santa Fe Central and the other papers she left with you."

"Are you Mr. Penrose, her uncle and guardian?"

"I am," replied the gentleman, stiffly.

At that moment the door opened and a district telegraph messenger entered with a Western Union dispatch.

"One moment, Mr. Penrose," said Bob, tearing the envelope open and reading the contents.

A slight smile passed over his features as he read the following:

"MR. SOMERS: My uncle has found the receipt you gave me for the certificates and vouchers, and is on his way to your office with it to demand them. Please hold the former and destroy the latter.

"ELSIE GRANT."

"How came you by that receipt, Mr. Penrose?" asked Bob.

"That is nothing to you, young man," replied the visitor, curtly. "I want the certificates of Santa Fe Central and the bundle of vouchers my niece left with you. She is under age and had no right to transfer them from my possession to yours."

"I am sorry, sir, but I can't oblige you without a direct order from the young lady herself," replied Bob.

"This receipt ought to be enough."

"It isn't enough."

"You have the papers in question, haven't you?"

"I have."

"I demand that you give them to me."

"I must refuse your demand."

Mr. Penrose looked hot under the collar.

"You will regret your refusal, young man," he said.

"I am willing to take the chances."

"I will secure an order from the Surrogate Court which will compel you to give them up."

"All right; go and get the order."

"Did my niece tell you to sell her stock?"

"She did not. She merely instructed me to hold it pending further orders from her."

"Well, you have no right to keep the other papers. They are vouchers which I have to present to the court with my final report."

Bob opened his safe and took out the envelope containing the vouchers.

He opened it and removed the papers.

Opening one of them he found it was a trademan's bill for a sealskin coat at a cost of \$450.

He read it off to his visitor.

"Is that one of the vouchers you claim?" he said.

"It is."

"I see a marginal note in a lady's handwriting which reads: 'This bill is a fraud. Never received this coat.'"

Mr. Penrose gave a gasp.

Bob dropped the voucher on his safe and read off a second one—a bill for a diamond ring, value \$625.

"This also has a note in the same handwriting denying that the young lady ever saw the ring," said Bob.

"Hand me those vouchers," roared the visitor furiously, leaning over the railing like a vulture with talons extended.

Bob dropped the bill on the other and opened a third.

This was an alleged bill for three tailor-made gowns at \$100 each.

Miss Grant, in lead pencil, denied that the gown were ever delivered.

In a furious rage Mr. Penrose felt for the gate so that he could enter the private enclosure.

Seeing that matters were coming to a crisis, Bob dropped the rest of the bills on the safe, pulled a match from his pocket, lit it and ignited the papers.

"Hold! What are you doing?" cried the excited man, dropping his book, paper and umbrella, and striding forward in an endeavor to reach the burning papers.

The little broker kept him back with his arm.

Just then Will and his sister entered the room.

CHAPTER IX.

A CROOKED PIECE OF BUSINESS.

"How dare you destroy my vouchers?" cried Mr. Penrose, trying to thrust Bob aside.

He was a strong man and the little stockbroker had to use both arms, and call upon Will, to keep him back.

They pushed him bodily outside of the railing.

"I'll have you arrested," sputtered the visitor.

"All right. I am acting under orders from Miss Grant. I received word from her to destroy those vouchers, that is why I am doing it. I think she is doing you a favor. If you presented those bogus bills before the court, and she declared that they were fictitious, you'd find yourself in a peck of trouble trying to explain your motive. The inference would naturally be that you were trying to cheat your niece out of some of her money."

"My niece is not yet of age, and you have no right to take any orders from her. I shall report your conduct to the Surrogate."

"You can do so if you think it will pay you. Here are your umbrella, book and newspaper. I don't think you have any further business here, so I will wish you good-day."

"I shall make you pay for this," cried Mr. Penrose as he turned toward the door. "I shall call on my lawyer at once, and you will hear from him in a way that you won't like."

"Good-day, sir," said Bob again.

Mr. Penrose favored him with a furious look, passed out and slammed the door after him.

"What's the ruction about, Bob?" asked Will.

"Oh, that gentleman made a demand on me which I refused to entertain."

"What have you been burning on your safe?"

"A few papers left with me, and which I received instructions to destroy."

"That man seemed to want to get at them."

"He was interested in them, and wanted to save them."

"From the way he talked it looks as if he intends to make trouble for you."

"I'm not worrying about anything he can do. I have authority for what I have done, and I guess that'll carry me through. I don't believe he'll do anything, anyway. Well, Miss Winship, have you come to visit the Exchange gallery this afternoon, according to the arrangement we made on Saturday?"

"Yes, if it will not interfere with your business," she replied.

"All right. We'll go over there now. It is half-past one."

Bob locked up and the three took the elevator for the street.

A few days later Bob thought he saw a chance to make money in L. & M., which was rising on a buoyant market, and he bought 2,000 shares at 90, expecting to turn his money over at a small advance within a day or two.

He saw that the fight over United Traction was getting hotter every day, and his sympathies, of course, were with Mr. Brown.

The newspapers were giving more space to the struggle, as it had become a matter of great interest in Wall Street, and the general public, though not concerned in it, perused the latest details with as much interest as did the brokers.

Mr. Brown had boosted the price of United Traction many points above its normal value, and devoted all his energies to keeping it up.

The opposition, though well supplied with money, could not afford to pay this high figure, which was bound to drop when the fight was over, and their brokers were doing everything they could to break the price.

Mr. Brown, like a great general, kept things well in hand.

He was a whole lot smarter at the game than Phil Leslie, who was the head and front of the opposition.

Leslie, however, like many of his associates, was unscrupulous.

When driven into a corner he was dangerous, and Mr. Brown had already got him and his bunch in a tight fix.

In their anxiety to start a slump the Leslie faction had sold many thousands of shares short, and Mr. Brown held their obligations to deliver.

Leslie realized that he and his associates could not meet their obligations, and he called a meeting to see what could be done to extricate themselves from their predicament.

This meeting took place on the afternoon preceding Decoration Day.

On the day after the holiday they would have to settle or go to the wall.

Mr. Brown, feeling sure that victory was in his grasp, went home quietly elated.

He had arranged to spend the holiday with a particular friend, at his estate on the south shore of Long Island.

He was to take the five o'clock train, and would be met at the railroad station by his friend in his automobile.

Bob Somers also went home feeling particularly good.

He had sold his L. & M. shares at an advance of five points and cleared \$10,000.

He, too, had arranged for a trip to the south shore of Long Island, and Will Winship was going with him.

They were going to take the five o'clock train, too, and their destination was the same station and village that Mr. Brown was bound for.

They intended to stay all night at the public inn and start out early in the morning on a trip they had in view.

Bob did not know that Mr. Brown was on the train until he and Will stepped off at the station and he saw the operator come out of the rear coach.

"There's Mr. Brown," he said to Will.

"Where?" asked his friend, looking around.

"Going toward that big auto that seems to have come for him."

"Too bad there's no auto waiting for us," said Will. "We'll have to walk to the inn."

"What else did you expect? One of these days, when I have a country place somewhere, and you honor me with a visit, I'll see that an auto meets you."

"Thanks. That will be when you've money to burn."

"I've got money to burn now, but I'm not a chump to burn it. I cleaned up ten thousand this afternoon on a quick deal."

"The dickens you did. If I did that you couldn't hold me in. I'd paint old New York the brightest shade of vermillion."

"Then you'd make a donkey of yourself. Come on, step out. It's going on seven and I feel hungry. Dinner is waiting for us."

The auto whisked Mr. Brown off in the direction of Great South Bay, and the two boys walked into the village, found the inn, registered, and went into the dining-room, where they were treated to a bang-up meal.

At another table there was a party of four well-dressed men.

They looked like Wall Street men to Bob, and he guessed they were down there on a spree over the holiday.

The boys sat on the piazza for an hour after dinner, and then Will said he was going to bed, as he felt sleepy.

They had been assigned to a large double-bedded room at the corner of the house, and Will lost no time in turning in.

Bob was in no hurry to follow his example, as he was not sleepy, so he sat by the open window and looked out on the quiet landscape, lit up by the rising moon.

In a short time he heard voices approaching that end of the house.

Looking out he recognized the four men he had seen in the dining-room.

They halted at the corner of the building, almost under the window where the boy sat.

The night was so quiet that their conversation reached his ears.

"Everything is arranged, is it, Duncan?" said one of the men.

"Yes, the boatman has his sloop tied to the wharf now, and will be ready to put off the moment we get there with our prisoner."

The word "prisoner" attracted Bob's attention, and he began to wonder if the men he had taken for Wall Street people were detectives in disguise.

At any rate he was now interested in the talk below, and listened eagerly to further revelations.

"There'll be consternation in the Brown camp on Friday when he fails to turn up, and the report is circulated that he's disappeared in a mysterious way," laughed the first speaker. "Leslie will take advantage of the chance to knock the bottom out of United Traction, and that will bring on a panic in the Exchange."

Bob gasped as he heard those words.

He instantly comprehended that there was a scheme on foot to do up Mr. Brown long enough to enable the opposition to get in their hooks and win out.

(Continued on page 20.)

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GOOD STORIES.

"Wolves are getting to be such a pest in Texas that the Legislature recently passed a scalp law, giving a bounty for each one slain," said Representative Burleson of the Lone Star State. "Our sheep and goat breeders have suffered great losses through the depredations on their flocks. Not long since I lost seven fine Angoras in one day, and unless some immunity from the miserable wolves can be had it is useless to keep in the business of breeding animals for them to destroy. The wolves are of two kinds—the small gray or timber wolf and the big black wolf, which revels in killing sheep and young calves. They are equally cunning in evading schemes aimed at their destruction. Some sort of intuition tells them to let alone a piece of poisoned meat. Then, after making a breakfast from a slaughtered lamb, Mr. Wolf will start off for pastures new, and by nightfall will be thirty miles distant from the scene of his morning crime."

On the day of the admission of M. Rostand to the French Academy the brilliant author of "Cyrano" and "L'Aiglon" gave a breakfast to a few of his friends, the guest of honor being Madame Bernhardt. The actress was dressed in a very handsome gown, which she declared had been made expressly for the occasion and was never to be worn again. At the end of the breakfast she arose, and with the impressive manner which she commands at will, took a glass, held it high and said: "I drink to the greatest of French dramatists, Monsieur Rostand, and I drink after the Greek manner!" She then poured the contents of her glass over her head and gown. Two of Rostand's small sons were sitting at a side table, wearing new velvet suits, also made for the occasion. In the silence which followed Madame Bernhardt's dramatic tribute the elder of the boys arose, and, imitating her manner, said: "I drink to the greatest of poets, my papa, and I also drink in the Greek fashion!" and straightaway deluged himself and his small brother with the contents of his glass. On being reprimanded and sent upstairs he declared that he could not see why he should be sent to bed for doing a thing which everybody applauded when Madame Bernhardt did it.

We hear much of the perfection of military organization abroad, but it is doubtful whether any foreign war office follows with an accuracy greater than that displayed by our own War Department the movement of its officers. The following is an interesting case in point: A young army officer who has seen service in this country and in the East was once with a small scouting party in Arizona. After two weeks in the

desert his squad came to the railway near a small station. Within ten minutes a telegram from Washington was brought to him by the station agent. It asked if the officer wished to be transferred to one of the new artillery regiments then forming. He answered by telegraph that he would be glad to enter either of them. Then with his squad he set off again across the desert. It was six days later when they again struck the railway, this time eighty miles from the point at which they had previously crossed it, but the officer's reply from the War Department was awaiting him. It had been telegraphed to every station within two hundred miles. A more striking instance of accuracy occurred after the same officer's transfer to the East. He was traveling home on leave and, as the regulations require, he had notified the department of the day, hour and probable route of his journey. After he had been on the train for eight hours at a small station the porter entered with a telegram, asking if any one of his name was present. On opening the telegram the officer found that it ordered him to detached duty. Exactness of detail could not be carried much further. The War Department knew the whereabouts of an insignificant second lieutenant even when he was traveling on leave of absence.

JOKES AND JESTS.

Amelia (at a dance given in honor of a flying visit from the fleet)—So you're off again to-morrow? Oh, you sailors are such birds of Paradise!

Mr. Freeborn Jackson—Whad yoh gwine name 'im, Laurelia?
Mrs. Jackson—Anyfing yoh laikes. Anyfing, 'cept Alias. Ise noticed boys o' that name nevah come to no good. They's allus in the police co't.

Mr. Crimsonbeak—Here is an article in this paper on "How a Man Should Carry a Gun When Loaded." Mrs. Crimsonbeak—Well, I don't think any man ought to be allowed to carry a gun when he is loaded.

"Say," remarked the first boy on the way to school, "I just heard the minister tell another man 'at my pa was a 'horrible example.' Wonder what 'at is." "I guess," replied the other, "he must have a lot of fractions in him."

"Now, then, my hearties," said a gallant captain, seeing that his men were likely to be outnumbered, "you have a tough battle before you. Fight like heroes till your powder's gone—then run. I'm a little lame; I'll start now!"

An inhabitant whose heels were striking sparks from the pavement as he walked entered the waterworks office the other day, selected his clerk, and fiercely announced: "Sir, you can send up and take your old gas meter out of my house." "This is not the gas office." "It isn't?" "No, sir, this is the waterworks office." "Oh, is it? Well, then, send a man up to my house at once and turn the water off. I'm not going to walk a mile and a half for nothing!"

"Edgar!" There were italics in her voice that sent a thrill of apprehension through him. "What is it?" he cried. "A hair on your coat lapel!" "It can't be anyone's but yours." "Do you think to deceive me. My hair is brown; that is blonde—very blonde." Edgar was silent for several heartbeats, and then with a sigh of relief, said: "Yes, my dearest. But this is an old coat. When I last wore it to see you, blonde hair was the fashion."

THE FOILED ROBBER

By Paul Braddon

At the close of a hot summer day, in the height of the great California "gold fever," two miners, each attired in a red woolen shirt, thin trousers, and a broad Mexican hat, came out of a rough-looking shanty near a small branch of the Sacramento, and seated themselves on a rude bench at the end of the hut.

One was Abe Lewis, who had been among the first and luckiest of the gold-seekers.

The other was Charley Andrews, a young man whom the trapper had picked up in a forlorn and famishing condition in the gulch further down the river, and generously invited to share his stock of provisions and rich diggings, where they were now situated.

The hunter sat contemplating the far off western hills, below which the sun had just disappeared.

The young man also looked westward, and with a satisfied glow upon his face, which might have been provoked by imaginary scenes, in which a certain fair-haired girl away in Maine figured conspicuously, and which were made possible in the future by a snug and daily increasing sum in a certain sack in the shanty.

But the young adventurer soon withdrew his gaze from the west, and began his perusal of a book he had brought from home.

So absorbed did he become in the novel that he failed to observe a tall, middle-aged, dark-complexioned miner, who came up the creek in a boat, which he left a few yards below the shanty, and stepping lightly over the intervening sands, handed Lewis a bit of paper with business-like air, and departed as silently as he came.

After the stranger had disappeared among the alders and lined the banks of the brook, Abe Lewis said:

"Youngster!"

"What now?" inquired young Andrews, looking up.

"There's a stranger been here from below. Just went away."

"What did he have to offer?" asked Charley.

"This here," said Abe, handing him the slip of paper. "You read it, I can't."

Charley took the paper and read the following, written in a plain though nervous hand:

"The steamboat Caroline will be at Snow's Landing, Aug. 5th, with a lot of rifles, ammunition, lumber, provisions, and miners' tools. All who want to buy anything, or send their gold to 'Frisco for safe keeping, must be at Snow's Landing on that day, for the steamboat will leave the next morning.

"A. JONES, Captain."

"Just the chance we want," said Charley, pocketing the paper.

"It is, provided everything is on the square," answered Abe. "I didn't like the looks of that feller. But we'll go."

Snow's Landing was situated fifty miles further down the Sacramento.

As that evening was the third of August, they would have to start early the next morning in order to be at their journey's end in good season.

Accordingly, the first rays of the morning sun found the two miners floating down the broad Sacramento in the hunter's capacious boat, into which they had loaded their rifles and bags of dust, amounting in all to fifteen thousand dollars, which they were desirous of sending to San Francisco for safe-keeping.

About nine miles below the point of starting was a dense forest.

Into this the miners had penetrated a mile or more, when Lewis said:

"Youngster, you look back there a little to the right of that big rock, and you'll see an oak tree. Keep your eye on that big gnarl on the left hand side of the tree, and see if it don't move. I'll manage the boat."

The young man had looked but a few seconds, when he exclaimed:

"It's an Indian! There! Did you see him start into the bushes?"

"I see him. He's been following us ever since we got into the woods. I presume he thinks he's going to gobble up our little pile. Some of the varmints have already diskivered the value of the yaller metal. But how he expects to do it is a mystery to me. He ain't got nothin' dangerous about him but a tomahawk. I s'pose we'll have to camp out somewhere in these woods to-night; but I don't think we're both goin' to fall into a snooze at once, and give him a hack at our carcasses."

"Can't we try his speed through the brush?" suggested Charley.

"We can't stand a long pull in this heat. But we might rush him for an hour or so, and see if he's bent on follerin' us. If he ain't dead set on prowlin' round our camp to-night, and watchin' his chances, he may give up the chase after a few miles. But we mustn't go too fast at first, or he may suspect we've seen him."

"So much the better for us," Charley responded.

"That's where you fool yourself, youngster. If he knew we'd seen him, he'd be too proud to turn back, and we'd have to have a scrimmage with him. Nothing short of a bullet in the right place would stop him."

Gradually increasing their speed until it reached the rate of five or six miles an hour and a half, which was as long as they thought safe to continue their exertions, so intense had grown the heat of the sun.

Early in the race the savage, who was tall and well-built for running, was seen once or twice worrying his way through the bushes and briars, which grew thickly all along the bank.

Each time he came in sight he was further in the rear of the miners, and for the last few miles he had failed to make himself visible.

Hoping the redskin had concluded to make some other camp fire than theirs the scene of his midnight raids, the miners allowed their craft to float slowly along with the current, until they were thoroughly cooled off.

Then they rowed steadily down the river until nightfall.

Nothing more had been seen of their pursuer, and they judged him to be many miles up the river, if he had not entirely given up the pursuit.

They were now within fifteen miles of Snow's Landing.

As they were pretty well used up by the day's work, they resolved to build a fire on the river bank, and take a little rest and a good deal of supper before proceeding further.

After they had drawn one end of the boat upon the bank, started a fire about ten feet away from it, boiled coffee and used it plentifully in washing down a supper of biscuit and venison, topped off with a few fish which they caught in the river, they stretched themselves before the camp fire.

The young man soon fell asleep, but Lewis, with his eyes on the boat in which they had left their gold, and his ear to the ground, ready to detect the faintest sound of approach in the adjacent underbrush, kept guard.

The miner had been thus engaged about an hour, and the darkness without the glow of the fire had grown to blackness, when the boat suddenly began to sway and rock a little, then,

propelled by some unseen power, it began to move slowly off into the river.

"No, ye don't," muttered Abe, as he sprang up and seized the boat with one hand, while in the other he held his rifle in readiness to puncture the would-be robber's skull whenever it should appear above water.

But nothing came in sight.

Silence reigned over forest and river.

"Youngster," was now called up and a torch held around the craft.

Nothing was to be seen.

If the savage had caused the commotion, he had swum off under water beyond the reach of the firelight.

Lewis declared it might have been a turtle that was in the mud under the boat, and so moved it in leaving.

Nevertheless, he picked up a rope that was attached to the craft and fastened it round a sapling near by, dexterously hiding the proceeding from the enemy.

A brighter fire was then made, and the two men again composed themselves round it, but not to sleep.

In a few minutes the boat once more began to move slowly off the bank.

This time its motion was hardly perceptible; but Lewis, who had what he called a "dead squint" on it, was satisfied that it did move.

"Guess we'd better pull the boat up here out of his reach, and then we'll see what his next dodge will be," whispered Abe. "Hold on—whoa up!" he added, aloud to the boat, which had taken a sudden start and gone clean off the bank, a foot or two from which it stopped suddenly as the rope tightened up.

The miners now sprang upon their feet and began to haul in the craft.

Some one pulled back on it at first, but it had to come all the same, and was soon drawn up near the fire, the light of which it shut away from a broad strip of the river.

Out in this dark spot a splashing was heard, and water in considerable quantities began to fly all over the two men, and into the fire, which it threatened to extinguish.

Both men bounded out of the deluging shower, drew their revolvers, and blazed away in the direction from which the noise proceeded.

But the shower continued to fall on the fire.

Having emptied their revolvers without effect, the miners drew near the boat, and stood holding their loaded rifles, and watching the camp fire sputter and steam out of existence—the young man terrified, and the hunter indulging in furious profanity over the new turn of affairs.

When all was blank darkness around them the splashing ceased.

"The rascal must have kept himself all under the water but his hand," whispered Abe. "Look alive, youngster! Keep your eyes open, if you don't want to feel that little hatchet of his."

For nearly a quarter of an hour, during which not a sound was heard, the two men stood guard over their treasure, trying to penetrate the blackness, and expecting every moment to be rushed upon and tomahawked by the savage.

Either the night grew a shade lighter, or the miner's eyes got better accustomed to the darkness, for he now discovered the dim outlines of a human form creeping towards them on the river bank scarcely ten feet away.

With a quick movement, Lewis brought his rifle to bear, and fired.

The figure sprang forward, and fell prone on the ground.

The miners were then astonished to hear a faint but unmistakable Yankee voice:

"Don't fire again, boys! You've hit me bad! Strike a light!"

A torch was soon held over the wounded man.

Its dim light revealed the now startled features of the stranger who had brought them that slip of paper at the shanty.

The ball had entered his right breast, and probably opened a large artery, for he was bleeding profusely.

"I was a fool to carry the thing so far," he said, as his life ebbed away. "I guess you know me, now the paint's washed off. I'm the man that brought you that notice about a steamboat. But you won't find any at Snow's Landing. You see I was hard up—out of grub, out of gold, no tools—not even a rifle—and no friends. I found you up here, away from the rest of the miners, and laid my plans to get your gold. I hid my boat, and played Indian, so you wouldn't suspect me in case we met further down the river. But you were a little too sharp for me. Never mind about me. Don't let this trouble you, lads. I deserve to die."

He soon breathed his last.

The miners buried his body in the morning, and then continued on fifty miles further down the river to Sacramento.

Here they resolved to wait for a steamer to arrive.

Luckily, one hove in sight after a few days, and leaving their gold on board to be carried to a responsible banking firm in San Francisco, they went back to work their rich "strike" once more.

MOUSE-POWER.

Since the days when man discovered the uses to which he might put his domesticated animals, no more curious form of animal power to operate machinery has been recorded than that devised by a canny Scot, one David Hutton, who, in the last century, conceived the notion of putting mice to work for him.

Hutton had seen certain toys and trinkets manufactured by the prisoners in a French jail. His attention had been especially attracted by a little toy house there, with a wheel in the gable, that was caused to revolve rapidly by a mouse of the common house variety. Hutton bought this device, and for a long time it afforded him much amusement, but later he began seriously to consider how a "half-ounce power" (the weight of the mouse) might be applied to some practical end. It finally occurred to him that the manufacture of sewing-thread might be aided in this way.

Now it happened that during the course of the Scot's experiments and investigations he ascertained that an ordinary mouse would average a run of ten and one-half miles per day; but he got one mouse that actually did the extraordinary distance of eighteen miles in that time. A halfpenny's worth of oatmeal porridge was found to be sufficient to feed it for a period of thirty-five days, during which time it made three hundred and sixty-two miles.

From that time Hutton enlisted the constant services of two mice to propel his mill for the making of sewing-thread. This mill was so constructed that the mouse was able to twist, twine, and reel from one hundred to one hundred and twenty threads a day, Sundays not excepted, for the Scot did not permit his religious convictions to interfere with the project.

To perform this task the little rodent was obliged to cover its ten and one-half miles a day, which, however, the mouse could do with ease. On the halfpenny's worth of oatmeal porridge, lasting five weeks, one of the little fellows made three thousand three hundred and fifty threads twenty-five inches long, and inasmuch as one penny was paid to women for every hank made in the ordinary way, the mouse at the rate mentioned earned eighteen cents very six weeks.

(Continued from page 16.)

"I must learn more," he breathed, "and then see what I can do to defeat this bunch of conspirators."

"How soon will it be safe to make a start?" asked one of the men.

"Most any time now. The only trouble we'll have is to get him out of the grounds without making any fuss. I rely on the letter I've brought to pave the way. Once we have him in the road we'll be all right."

"Yes; our auto will carry him to the wharf in five minutes. There is not likely to be any hitch there for the water-front is probably deserted at this hour, and there will be no one around but our boatman to see what happens."

"Well, you go and get the machine, Appleby, and we'll meet you down the road a bit," said Duncan.

The bunch then moved off and Bob began to consider how he should act.

The first difficulty that presented itself was the fact that he had no idea of the place where Mr. Brown was, except that it was somewhere along the road between the village and the bay shore.

Likely as not there were several residences owned by well-to-do people in that direction, and there wasn't time for him to try one after the other.

However, Bob determined to do his best to find the operator and warn him of what was in the wind.

He put on his hat and left the room.

He got out of the inn by a side door and hurried in the direction of the road.

He expected that he would have to pass the three men who had preceded him, but he didn't believe they would pay any special attention to him.

He reached the road without seeing them, and turned toward the shore.

Hurrying along at a rapid pace he kept his eyes on the alert for a residence such as he judged Mr. Brown would go to.

At length he saw one, setting back from the road in extensive grounds.

There was a porter's lodge just inside the main gate, and as the small gate was locked, Bob looked for a bell handle and rang it.

A man came to the gate and asked him what he wanted.

"Will you tell me if you have a gentleman visitor who came by the last train from New York?" asked the little stockbroker. "His name is Brown."

"No," replied the man, "we haven't any visitors here to-day. Mr. Haywood, a quarter of a mile further on, brought somebody from the station in his auto about seven o'clock. He may be the party you are looking for."

"Is Mr. Haywood's place next to this?" asked Bob.

"No, it's the second house on the other side of the road."

The boy thanked the man and was turning away when the auto containing the four men passed by at some speed.

Bob hurried after it, but, of course, he couldn't expect to keep it in sight.

It speedily vanished around a turn.

Bob kept on at a slow run, passed a large estate with a fine house on it, and after a few minutes came in sight of the residence he had been directed to.

He saw an auto standing in front of the gate.

As he drew near he saw several people come out and jump into it.

Almost at once there seemed to be a struggle taking place in the machine.

Before Bob reached the spot it drove off toward the shore.

"I'm afraid they've got him," muttered the little broker, in some excitement.

When he reached the place he found the small gate open and a man lying on the ground.

Apparently he was the gate-keeper, who had been knocked out by the conspirators to prevent him from raising an alarm.

The sight of him in that condition convinced Bob that the worst had happened.

The men had got hold of Mr. Brown.

The boy felt he had no time to lose in following the auto to the shore.

He doubted if his endeavors would be of any use now.

According to what he had heard one of the men say the wharf was only a short distance off—five minutes ride in the auto.

But it would probably take him three times as long to cover the distance on foot.

That would give the men fully ten minutes advantage of him.

They were going to take Mr. Brown off somewhere in a sloop.

Bob noticed that there wasn't much wind stirring, so the sloop could not get much headway on her if she left the wharf before he reached it.

The boy's idea was to hunt up another boatman and hire him to follow her.

That would mean the loss of precious time, and while he was so employed the sloop might elude him altogether.

As he hustled along he determined to take possession of any boat he found near or at the wharf and sail her himself in the wake of the sloop.

It took him all of a quarter of an hour to get within sight of the bay.

Then he saw the auto returning with one man in it.

The other three had gone off with the prisoner.

When he got down near the wharf the sloop was nearly half a mile away.

She was headed to the west under mainsail and a jib.

There was not a soul stirring in the vicinity.

A score of small cottages were scattered around, and lights flashed from the windows of some of them.

Several skiffs were tied to the inner side of the wharf, and a couple of catboats were moored a dozen yards out on the bay.

Bob's aim was to reach one of the latter.

None of the rowboats had oars in them, their owners having taken them away as a precaution against anybody using them.

Furthermore, the boats were secured by padlocks.

As soon as that fact became apparent to the little stockbroker he felt that his intentions were blocked.

How was he to reach one of the cat-boats?

A glance at the sloop showed that she was widening her distance every minute.

"It looks as if I'm stuck," muttered Bob. "What in thunder am I going to do?"

He was certainly up against it.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHASE.

Bob was at his wit's end.

He knew that Mr. Brown was the backbone of United Traction, and that if he was not on the job on Friday morning his carefully matured plans were likely to go to smash under the pressure that would be brought against them by the opposition.

The operator was in the power of the three men aboard the sloop, and he (Bob) was the only friend who knew what he was up against.

The little stockbroker rushed to the end of the wharf to see if there was a boat tied there that he could get.

There was none.

"I don't see any way to reach one of those cat-boats but to swim to it," he said.

That was an experience that he didn't relish much, for the night was chilly, and he knew the water was cold.

Still he wouldn't have minded that if he thought he could carry his clothes so that they wouldn't get wet.

The idea of being obliged to get into wet clothes after he reached the boat was what made him hesitate to attempt the only plan that seemed available.

Finally he looked along the opposite of the wharf, and there, to his great satisfaction he saw a small skiff thrust under it, secured only by a rope.

He pulled the boat out, found a pair of oars in it, unloosened the painter, jumped in, and pulled toward the nearest of the two cat-boats.

Securing the painter to a cleat in the stern of the sailboat, he lost no time in hoisting the sail.

The boat had no jib, just a single mainsail.

Shoving the boom out to the leeward, Bob went forward and unhitched the mooring-rope which held the cat-boat to a buoy.

Then as the boat fell away he ran back to the cockpit, seized the tiller and put the little craft on her course.

The sloop was still in sight, some distance ahead, for the moonlight lit the long and narrow stretch of Great South Bay up for a long distance in either direction.

Believing that those aboard the sloop were on the alert for the possibility of pursuit, Bob did not head for her, but skirted close in to the shore.

The dark line of the land would hide the little sailboat, but if seen her course would not be likely to attract suspicion.

Bob had some experience in sailing small fore-and-aft boats, and therefore was easily able to manage the one he was aboard of.

His purpose was not to try and reach the sloop, for he knew he could do nothing against the three conspirators, backed up by their boatman, if he overhauled her.

His whole object was to shadow the vessel that carried

Mr. Brown in order to discover where the men were taking the operator.

After locating their destination he figured that he could then think up a plan to accomplish the rescue of the prisoner, and so defeat the object of the opposition clique.

With the light wind on her beam the little cat-boat made more speed than the sloop, though the latter had the advantage of a bigger mainsail and a jib.

The difference was not a whole lot, it is true, but it prevented the sloop from giving her pursuer the slip.

An hour passed and the two crafts had left the wharf some distance behind.

"I've caught up on her a bit," thought Bob. "I hope the wind doesn't freshen, for that would probably put me out of the race."

He wished Will were with him to give him a hand in case of need, and also for his company; but Will was sleeping placidly in his bed at the inn, totally unconscious that his friend, the little stockbroker, was out on the bay sailing a cat-boat, and bound on a cruise the result of which he could not foresee.

There appeared to be no third craft on the bay as far as Bob could see, and he wondered if those on the sloop had noticed the cat-boat running along in shore.

The night wore on and Bob crept nearer to the sloop.

He didn't follow the shore line exactly, for that would have caused him to cover more ground than the chase, which was sailing a direct course, and he would have fallen behind.

He simply followed a straight line as close in shore as he deemed advisable, paralleling the sloop's course.

Under the conditions that prevailed he would ultimately reach a point in line with the sloop, and forge ahead of her, but he would still be a mile or more away from her.

Looking at his watch Bob found it was midnight.

The abduction of the operator had taken place about nine.

He had been chasing the sloop for nearly three hours.

Clouds had swept up into the sky, hiding the moon's face at intervals, showing that there was wind a mile or so above the earth.

When the moon went out of sight Bob couldn't see the sloop, but that didn't make any difference, for she never altered her course.

He noticed a point of land ahead which he would have to pass.

In order to avoid the extended line of shore he had to bring the boat's head around so that his course formed an acute angle with that of the sloop's.

By the time he reached this cape-like projection he found he had drawn half a mile closer to the chase.

He feared those aboard of her would take notice of him now.

Securing the tiller with a rope he entered the little cabin to see if the owner had a spyglass there.

Striking a match he lighted the small reflector lamp attached to the forward wall, and then looked around.

Trying one of the lockers, he found it was not locked.

It was partly full of clothes and various odds and ends. While feeling around to see if there was a binocular in it, his fingers lighted on the butt of a six-shooter.

He pulled it out and found that it was fully loaded.

"This is likely to be useful in an emergency," he thought, thrusting it into his pocket.

There was a second locker on the opposite side which he also went through, but found nothing in it like a glass.

As he was leaving the cabin he saw what he was hunting for strapped with bands close to the ceiling over the door.

He released it, and returning to the cockpit, took a sight at the sloop.

She was close enough to get a clear view of her cockpit.

Only one person was there, the man who was steering, who Bob judged was the boatman.

The three men and the prisoner were in the cabin.

The moon went behind a big cloud and Bob lost sight of the chase.

He looked up at the cloud and tried to calculate how long the moon was likely to stay out of sight.

He judged it would be for some time.

While the gloom lasted the little stockbroker felt that he could run close to the sloop without being observed.

A daring plan had occurred to him to bring the chase to a conclusion.

Its success depended as much on chance as on his nerve.

After figuring a few minutes he determined to risk it.

He put the boat's head directly for the sloop, or at least for the place he judged the craft to be at that moment.

The chase then continued on in the dark.

A rift in the big cloud permitted the moon to shine for a moment or two on the surface of the bay.

The light showed Bob that he was creeping close upon the sloop.

He could see the helmsman plainly with the naked eye.

During the few seconds the moon shone the man did not look in the direction of the approaching cat-boat.

Fifteen minutes elapsed and another slight rift disclosed the relative positions of the two boats.

Still the boatman did not pay any attention to the little craft that was now close aboard of his vessel.

From his posture Bob judged that he was half asleep.

The light wind made steering easy for him, and with his arm thrown over the tiller, and a broad expanse of water ahead, he could manage with his eyes shut.

Looking at his watch Bob noted that the hour was two.

"I'm fortunate so far," he said to himself. "If luck only holds there will be something doing shortly."

As the moments passed the outline of the sloop's sails came into view through the darkness, and Bob knew he was getting very near to her.

Tying the rudder again he went forward and fixed the cat-boat's mooring-line ready to be grabbed up at a moment's notice.

Another quarter of an hour passed and the sloop was apparently so close that he could shy a biscuit aboard of her.

Five minutes later the moon sailed out into a clear sky.

The cat-boat was close to the sloop's stern.

To Bob's surprise the helmsman did not appear to be conscious of his presence, but a close look showed that he was actually asleep at his post.

His head was bent forward on his chest, and the tiller was hugged close to his side.

Bob lashed the tiller again, went forward and picked up the line.

Five minutes more and the bow of his craft would overlap the starboard quarter of the sloop.

What he would do then was already outlined in his mind.

Foot by foot the cat-boat crept up, Bob standing in the bow.

Suddenly the boatman awoke with a start and looked around in a dreamy way.

He saw the cat-boat looming up on top of him as it were.

In a moment he was alert, for he thought the little craft was about to run into his vessel.

"Hi, hi! Port your helm! What in thunder are you up to?"

As he spoke he altered his own tiller to starboard, which completely spoiled the move Bob was about to put into execution.

If Will had been aboard to follow up the change it wouldn't have mattered so much; but being alone Bob had to drop the rope and run back to the cockpit.

Unlashing the tiller he brought the cat-boat on the same course as the sloop.

"Hello, there!" shouted the boatman. "Don't you know starboard from port?"

"Yes; but I want to speak to you," returned the boy.

"You don't have to run into me to do that," growled the boatman.

"I don't intend to run into you."

"What do you want to come so close for? Don't you see that you'll hit my boom if you keep on the way you're heading if one of us doesn't turn out. It's your place to keep away."

"I want you to throw your hat into the wind and come to," said Bob.

The man fairly gasped at what he considered a cheeky request.

"Say, you've got a nerve, young feller," he said.

"You'll find I have plenty of it if you don't do as I say."

"What!" roared the astonished and now angry man.

"Are you crazy?"

"Are you going to lay to?" demanded Bob, as his boat crept close up to the stern of the sloop again.

"No, of course I ain't, you blamed monkey. Keep away, d'ye hear?"

Bob had tied his tiller again while talking.

Now he jumped up and ran forward, revolver in hand.

"If you shove your tiller over again I'll shoot you!" he cried, covering the astonished boatman.

"Great Scott! I'm up against a lunatic," muttered the man, with a look of trepidation in his face, as he saw the weapon pointed within a yard of his head.

Bob snatched up the mooring line of his boat, but kept his eye and revolver on the boatman.

"What do you want?" faltered the man.

"Get away from that tiller," said the little stockbroker.

"You'll run me down if I do. What do you mean, anyway?"

"Get away. I'm coming aboard."

"What do you want aboard here?"

"That's my business."

At that moment one of the conspirators, who had been aroused by the loud talking, poked his head out of the open cabin door.

"What's the matter, Thompson?" he asked. "What does this boat want alongside of us?"

"I don't——" began the man.

Bob fired at him so the ball would pass close to his head.

With a howl of fear the boatman dropped the tiller and sprang for the door.

He collided with the man who had started to step out, and both went sprawling inside on the cabin floor.

Bob jumped into the sloop's cockpit and hitched the line rapidly around the nearest cleat.

That kept the cat-boat from going any further ahead, and her weight acted as an obstacle to the sloop's falling off.

Bob dashed at the door, closed it with a bang and turned the key, thus making prisoners of all on board.

His next move was to step aboard the cat-boat and let the mainsail down with a run.

As she began to fall behind he jumped aboard the sloop and brought her about on the opposite tack, heading her for a village he had noticed on the shore, a mile away.

Everything had worked out fine, and he felt that he was master of the situation.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONSPIRATORS IN A FIX.

The rest of the bunch, who had been asleep, were aroused by this time, and the three conspirators were furious over the turn of affairs.

They could not understand matters from the explanation given by the boatman.

Their first impression was that they had been pursued by a party whose purpose was the rescue of Mr. Brown, and they roundly abused the boatman for not keeping a sharp lookout against such a thing, and also for not arousing them when he saw the craft coming up.

The boatman, however, assured them that the boat was only a cat-rigged sailboat, and that her only occupant when she came up was a boy, who was, in his opinion, crazy, for he had pulled a revolver on him and finally did try to blow his head off.

"Crazy!" exclaimed Duncan.

"Plum off his nut," nodded the boatman.

"And he's come aboard this craft and you allowed him to drive you away from the tiller?"

"I didn't want a bullet in my brains," protested the man.

"Who is he?"

"I don't know who he is. I never saw him before."

"How do you know he's crazy?"

"From his talk and actions. He ran right up under the sloop's stern and ordered me to lay to."

"What reason did he give for making such a demand?"

"Didn't give no reason, except he said he wanted to talk to me."

"How came you to let him get so close?"

"Well, it was dark, and——"

"Dark! Why the moon was up and the sky clear when we started."

"I know it; but a bank of black clouds came up——"

"The moon is shining now. I can see it through the skylight."

"It's got out of the clouds."

"Look here, Thompson, this thing looks mighty queer to me. If you had been attending to your business I'm sure no boat could have got alongside without you seeing it, and then it was your duty to notify us. Here we've been locked in here by that boy—if he is a boy, and the question is what are we going to do? We can't let him remain in charge of the sloop. You've put us in the fix, so it's up to you to get us out. This is your boat. Break open the door and order that chap to leave. If he won't go, we'll all lend you a hand to throw him back into his own craft. We have simply got to get rid of him at once."

"But he's got a revolver and will shoot as quick as wink," said the boatman. "He shot at me for no cause whatever, except that I refused to come to, and it's a miracle I wasn't killed, for he wasn't more than a yard off when he fired."

"I don't believe he's crazy," said Duncan. "He must have some object in view. Are you sure he hasn't any men with him?"

"I didn't see any one else with him. He had to lash his tiller to hold it when he ran forward, which wouldn't have been necessary if he had anybody with him."

"It isn't likely that he's after us, for what could he do against four of us?"

"He seems to have done a whole lot," remarked Appleby. "At present he's boss of the situation, and the question is what are the four of us going to do against him."

"Are you going to burst open the door?" Duncan asked the boatman.

The man didn't seem eager to do so.

"We'll make good the damage, though I blame you for the condition of things."

It was the thought of the revolver more than the damage to the door that had a deterring effect on the boatman.

His hesitation exasperated Duncan.

"You're a coward," he said, angrily. "I'll see what I can do."

He went to the door and pounded on it.

"What do you want?" asked Bob, who had been listening to the sound of talk in the cabin, the words of which he had not been able to distinguish.

"Open the door and let us out."

"I'd rather not," replied the little stockbroker.

"That boy isn't crazy," thought Duncan. Then he said aloud: "What's your object coming aboard here and making prisoners of us in the cabin?"

"Just to keep you out of mischief," replied Bob.

"That isn't a very lucid reply. Maybe he is a little off," thought Duncan. "But this is our boat," he said aloud.

"I won't dispute that fact," returned the boy.

"Then why have you taken possession of it?"

"Because it suited me to do so."

"Don't you know you can be prosecuted and put in jail for your conduct?"

"No, I think it's more likely that you, and your two friends, and the boatman, will be prosecuted and put in jail for kidnapping Mr. Brown, whom you are holding a prisoner in the cabin, unless you release him, and come to terms with him," replied the little stockbroker.

Duncan gave a gasp.

He saw the point of the whole thing in earnest now.

After that explanation he couldn't believe that the speaker had come after them all by himself.

He must have one or more companions at his back.

"The game is up," he said, turning to his friends.

"What do you mean?" asked Appleby.

"That boy, and others, I guess, have chased us from the wharf to rescue Brown. They've got us where the hair is short, and I suppose we'll have to throw up our hands," answered Duncan.

His two friends received his words in consternation.

"Are you sure of that?" said Appleby.

"There's no doubt of it. The boy told me so himself."

Appleby and his companion gasped in their turn.

"What are we to do?" said the former.

"What can we do but give in? We are prisoners in this cabin. We cannot get out because the door is locked, and the boy, backed by others, is in the cockpit with a loaded revolver. We must throw ourselves on Brown's mercy."

"Fine mercy he'll deal out to us after what we've done, and what he knows we intended to do. He will put us through for this. Mason will be caught later on, and the four of us will go to the State prison."

"Well, it's a tough prospect, but fate is against us."

"Are you willing to don the stripes and take your place among the herd of condemned men at Sing Sing?—you, John Duncan, the ladies' man of Wall Street? The high-roller of the Great White Way?"

"Hang it, man, don't bring up such a picture to me," cried Duncan, clenching his hands. "No, I am not willing; but if I can't get out of this hole——"

"There are four of us here, and we have no evidence that on the outside there is anybody but that boy with his revolver."

"He wouldn't come alone. Why should one boy pit himself against four men and expect to win? No, no; he has people behind him."

"That is only a supposition. Thompson claims that he only saw the boy. That the boy alone boarded the sloop. Let us deal with facts and not with suppositions."

"What are you trying to get at?"

"This. If we are taken to the shore and turned over to the police we are ruined forever. We must escape."

"How? The door is fastened. If we break it down the boy will probably shoot in self-defence."

"We've got to take some chances; but the door is not the only avenue of escape."

"What other avenue is there?"

"The skylight."

"Ah! I had forgotten that," said Duncan, brightening up.

"More fool you. When your liberty is at stake it ought to brighten up your wits. My plan is this: Thompson has got us into this scrape, and he must do his part to help us out. He's in the same boat, anyway."

"Well?"

"He must attack the door with whatever implements come handy. That will engage the boy's attention. While he is so employed we'll smash the skylight."

"A bullet can reach us there as well as at the door."

"Never mind about that. We'll shove Brown up first

to act as a shield against the bullets. I doubt if there will any come our way, for the boy won't dare to fire for fear of hitting Brown."

"And suppose we do reach the deck, how can we escape out here on the bay?"

"We won't act till we're close in shore, and then we'll take to the water."

"How will we know when we are near shore?"

"We must watch the boy through the key-hole of the door, and his actions will give us a clue."

"The key is in the key-hole, and we can't see through it," said Duncan.

"Then we must smash the skylight after awhile and try and see where we are."

While the men were planning escape in the cabin, Bob was sailing the sloop toward the village wharf, which was now close at hand.

The hour was about four, and he was tickled to death over his success.

He had the three conspirators and the boatman cooped up so they couldn't get away—at least he didn't see how they could.

It is true that Mr. Brown was still a prisoner, but that wouldn't be for long.

"Strategy beats force any day," he chuckled. "Strategy is what counts in Wall Street. I have worked it to-night to the queen's taste, and Mr. Brown can thank his stars that I came to L—— village this afternoon. If I hadn't—but what's the use of talking about ifs? This night's work will give me a reputation in Wall Street for a few days at any rate, for Mr. Brown will give me full credit for saving him, and also United Traction from the consequences that must have taken place if he failed to show up in the Exchange on Friday morning."

The wharf was only a short distance away when Bob's ears were suddenly saluted by the crash of glass.

He sprang on his feet and looked at the cabin skylight.

Part of one side of it had been demolished.

A head was thrust out of the fractured opening and then quickly withdrawn.

"They're going to try to escape that way," muttered Bob, drawing the revolver. "Well, let them. If they get hurt it's their own fault."

He began lashing the sloop's rudder.

While he was doing it the boatman started to break down the door.

A human form appeared up through the opening of the skylight.

"Hold on there," cried Bob. "If you try to get out I'll fire."

"Fire away," replied a voice, "and you'll hit Brown."

Then the little broker saw that it was Mr. Brown who had been forced up to act as a human breastwork between the conspirators and the revolver.

CHAPTER XII.

MONEY TO BURN!

Bob understood the situation at once, but it didn't disconcert him in the least.

He was a boy who thought quickly in an emergency, and acted just as promptly.

He acted so quickly this time that he foiled the object that the conspirators had in view.

First he stepped to the door and fired a bullet through the wood, wounding Thompson slightly, and demoralizing him entirely.

Then he jumped on the roof of the cabin, grabbed the bound form of the operator with one hand, and with the other shoved his revolver into the face of Appleby, who was in the act of climbing out.

"Get back, or I'll blow your roof off," he said, resolutely.

Appleby wilted and tumbled down into the cabin.

Bob then pulled Mr. Brown away from the skylight and removed the gag from his mouth.

"Ha, Bob, is this you?" cried the operator, gratefully.

"Yes, Mr. Brown, it's me all right. I'll have you free in a jiffy."

He got out his knife and cut the gentleman loose.

At that moment the sloop glided up to the wharf.

Bob seized the line, sprang on the little dock and made the boat fast to a low pile head.

Then he returned to the sloop, swung the boom aboard, and let the sail down with a rush so that it fell not only over the boom but over the skylight as well, and the gaff tumbled on top of it, holding it down by its weight.

The conspirators now had no chance whatever to escape through the broken skylight.

"What fortunate occurrence brought you down to this neighborhood to-night, Bob, and how did it happen that you heard of my capture by those rascals, and have come to my rescue?" asked Mr. Brown, eagerly.

"No time to explain things now, sir. We have got to secure our prisoners first of all. You had better go into the village and rouse up somebody, explain matters, and find out where the constable lives. Bring him back with you. I'll stay here and see that the men do not get out of the cabin. If they make any desperate attempt that is likely to prove successful, I shall certainly shoot, not to kill, but to intimidate them. If one or more are hurt they can blame themselves," said Bob, in a business tone.

"You're right, Bob; I'll go. Those chaps must take their own medicine now, and I'll see that they get a dose they won't soon forget. This is the end of the United Traction fight. I have won anyway, but this will put a clincher on it that will set Wall Street by the ears."

With those words Mr. Brown stepped on to the wharf, and started toward the village, which straggled out around the immediate vicinity.

Bob busied himself securing the stern of the sloop to the wharf also.

Then he seated himself on the stringpiece, where he could overlook the whole craft, and, with the revolver in his hand, waited for Mr. Brown to return with the constable and anybody else he could pick up.

The prisoners were aware, by the stoppage of the sloop, that she had reached the shore, and after their failure to escape, they saw their finish ahead, and were feeling pretty rocky.

Everything having become quiet outside, they wondered whether the boy was standing guard over them or not.

To test the matter Duncan pounded on the door.

"What do you chaps want now?" asked the little stockbroker.

There was no reply for a moment, then Duncan said:

"Are you alone?"

"Yes, I'm alone. What about it?"

"Where is Brown?"

"Gone to get the town police to take you fellows in charge."

A few moments of silence followed.

"Say," said Duncan again.

"Well, I'm listening."

"Can't we make some arrangement with you?"

"What do you mean?"

"We'll pay you \$1,000 if you'll let us get away at once."

"Want to bribe me, eh?"

"Call it that if you want to. We'll give you \$200 now and the balance in a day or two if you'll give me your name and address."

"No, sir. One thousand or \$10,000 isn't any object to me to let you off."

"It won't do you any good to send us to jail."

"It will do Mr. Brown a lot of good to do it."

"Never mind Brown. Think of your own interests."

"My interest and Mr. Brown's are the same in this case."

"Say, who are you, anyway?"

"Did you ever hear of the little stockbroker in the Laidlaw Building?"

"You don't mean to say you are that chap?"

"I'm nobody else."

"How came you to be down this way at this time?"

"Came down with a friend to have a good time on Decoration Day, but I'm afraid you chaps have spoiled it by keeping me up all night."

"How did you find out so soon that we had carried Brown off?"

"Oh, I'm a second-sight artist. I knew it was going to happen before you pulled it off, but not in time to stop you, though I tried to."

"How did you know?"

"Oh, I'm not telling how I learned it, for I'm afraid it would give you a fit if you found out the truth."

"I don't know what you mean."

"Of course you don't. Where ignorance is bliss 'twere folly to be wise," laughed Bob.

"Say, won't you compromise with us?"

"No, sir. You and your crowd in Wall Street haven't money enough to buy me off. Better save your breath now. You'll need it to explain matters to the magistrate when you're brought before him."

"I don't see what satisfaction you'll have in sending three gentlemen to jail."

"Gentlemen are never guilty of what you have done. Better call yourselves by some other name. I see Mr. Brown coming with three men. Prepare yourselves for the march to the lock-up."

Bob got up and awaited the approach of the quartette. The door of the cabin was unlocked and the prisoners were invited to step outside one by one.

They reluctantly obeyed, looking foolish and disgusted with life.

They were handcuffed to each other and marched to the lock-up.

Mr. Brown promised to be on hand at ten o'clock at the office of the village magistrate to appear against them.

As the village of L——, where the operator and Bob were stopping, was all of eighteen miles away, they decided to stay where they were for the present.

The constable took them to the village hotel, which was dark and silent at that hour.

The proprietor was aroused and furnished them with a couple of rooms, promising to have them called at nine o'clock.

Before retiring the little stockbroker told Mr. Brown how it happened that he came down to that part of the country, and how he discovered the scheme to do him up over Friday.

He then told about his efforts to defeat the job, failing in which how he had chased the kidnapers in the cat-boat, and stole a march on the boatman, which led to his rescue.

"Bob, you have done me a favor, the value of which you may understand when I say that you have saved United Traction from a species of Waterloo that would have undone all my work of the past three months, and possible have cost me and my associates the control of the road. Believe me, I am deeply grateful to you, and I shall not forget the obligation I realize I am under to you."

Thus spoke the millionaire operator, and he meant every word.

At ten o'clock Mr. Brown and Bob were at the magistrate's office, where the prisoners were brought by the constable and two of his deputies.

The prisoners, however, waved examination, and were held for trial at the county seat.

Soon afterward they were removed to the county jail, but before they reached that place a telegram, sent by Duncan, had been received by Phil Leslie, in New York, apprising him of the complete failure of the job against Mr. Brown, and of their own predicament.

The leader of the opposition was thrown into the greatest consternation by the news.

The affair was bound to get into the newspapers, and then all Wall Street would know of the underhanded methods adopted by himself and his associates to overthrow United Traction.

Leslie felt that the reputation of all would suffer, and that it was also quite possible that all hands would be involved in a criminal prosecution.

He hustled around to see some of his friends to consult with.

In the afternoon he took a train for the county seat and bailed out the prisoners, after which he went on to L—— to try and square matters with Mr. Brown.

The operator was mad clear through at the outrage which had been pulled off on him, and which would probably have gone through and led to disastrous results in Wall Street but for the prompt and plucky efforts of the little stockbroker, and he was not disposed to listen to any compromise with the opposition.

Phil Leslie, thoroughly scared by the outlook, practically got down on his knees to the operator, and finally Mr. Brown agreed to hush the matter up and not prosecute the combine if Leslie agreed to certain terms that he proposed.

His terms were very hard, and meant the financial cleaning out of the opposition, but that was preferable to exposure, which meant ruin, and the chance of imprisonment in Sing Sing.

Leslie agreed to everything, and from that hour Mr. Brown's hold on United Traction became stronger than ever, and he and his friends were duly re-elected directors at the next meeting of the road in Jersey City.

On his return to the city next day, Mr. Brown called all his associates to his office, and told them of the narrow escape they had had from financial disaster, and how they owed their safety and success to the little stockbroker.

"Gentlemen, we owe Bob Somers a substantial recognition for his invaluable services," said Mr. Brown. "I move that out of the profits we shall make from the settlement with the enemy we present the little broked with 500 shares of United Traction."

"Second the motion," said one of the gentlemen promptly.

Accordingly, two days later, Bob received by a messenger a bulky, oblong envelope, bearing in a corner the imprint of the secretary's office of the United Traction Company.

Opening it he found five 100-share certificates of the stock of that corporation made out in his name.

A letter, signed by Mr. Brown, in his official capacity as president of the company, informed him that the enclosed stock had been voted to him by the gentlemen who recognized that he had saved them many million dollars, as well as the control of a big corporation.

"Gee whiz! Five hundred shares!" breathed Bob, "and United Traction is worth \$150 a share in the market to-day. That means these five certificates are worth \$70,000. Add to that the \$30,000 I have in my safe, and I am clearly worth at this moment \$100,000. Gracious! I have money to burn!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LITTLE STOCKBROKER IN A TRAP.

That afternoon Bob had a visit from Elsie Grant.

He had been looking for her call in relation to her 500 shares of Santa Fe Central, which he held for her in his safe.

He had heard nothing from her uncle and guardian, Mr. Penrose, or from his lawyer, with respect to the destruction of the bogus vouchers.

Evidently that gentleman had concluded not to push the matter.

"Delighted to see you again, Miss Grant," said Bob. "Take that seat, please."

"I have called to commission you to sell my stock. I see by the papers that it is now worth 80. That will give me \$40,000 in cash, which I shall want you to invest for me in gilt-edge bonds paying five per cent."

"All right, Miss Grant. I can sell your stock without any trouble. Just sign this order authorizing me to dispose of it at the market."

The young lady did so.

"As to the five per cent. bonds, I presume you understand that you will have to pay a premium for them. That will reduce your income on them to some extent. The bonds will cost you anywhere from 103 upward, according to the reputation they enjoy in the financial market."

"I suppose so," she replied. "But I'm willing to pay for the best security."

"It would be the same if you handed your money to a

guarantee and trust company to invest for you in bond and mortgage. The company would sell you five per cent. mortgages at about four and a half. That is, the company would charge you one-half per cent. for guaranteeing the investment."

"I see; but that would make the investment absolutely safe, wouldn't it?"

"As safe as the company itself, and those companies are backed by large surpluses. Presumably they are as solid as any financial institution, honestly managed, can be. Bonds of the gilt-edged variety may be considered equally safe, and are much more convenient to have in case you should need money for some emergency. You could sell one or more right away at the market, and get your money off hand."

Bob enjoyed an hour's pleasant talk with the young lady, and was more than ever impressed by her beauty and delightful manners.

She said her uncle had backed down from his project to get the better of her financially, and the report he had put into the Surrogate Court had been passed upon and accepted, the judge discharging him from his position of trust over his late ward.

"So now you are your own mistress?" smiled Bob.

"Yes," she replied, "and very glad I am, too. I like to be independent."

Finally she said she must go, and on the way to the elevator with Bob she invited him to call upon her at her uncle's home.

He accepted the invitation with alacrity, and promised to visit her soon.

He sold Miss Grant's stock that afternoon through his uncle.

On the following afternoon he received a check for it, and notified the young lady that he held the sum of nearly \$40,000 subject to her order.

He also informed her that he had made out a list of the best available bonds for her to select from.

She came down in a few days, went over the list with Bob, and finally picked out the securities she liked best.

He purchased them for her, and then introduced her at a safe deposit vault, where she rented a box and laid them away for safe keeping.

A few days later Bob saw that S. & T. was going up, and he thought this a good chance to make another haul.

He bought 3,000 shares and gave all his attention to watching the market.

The price fluctuated from day to day, but the general tendency was always upward, so that two weeks from the time Bob got in on the deal, S. & T., which he had bought at 98, was ruling at 105 and a fraction.

He concluded to sell out and did, clearing \$21,000.

On the same day Mr. Brown called on him.

"Somers, I've got a commission for you," he said.

"Glad to hear it, Mr. Brown. I've just closed out a deal at a profit of \$21,000, and I have nothing on hand but the accounts of a few customers with whom I do a mail-order business."

"Well, I want you to go around among the brokers of Broad street and Exchange place, and buy up all the D. & N. shares you can find at the market, or a nominal advance

above it. Don't call on any Wall street brokers, as I have another broker looking after them," said the operator.

"All right, sir."

"Order all your purchases to be delivered C. O. D. at the Manhattan National. Send in a report every day till I tell you to stop, then you can make out your statement of account, and I will settle with you."

Mr. Brown went away, and the little stockbroker started out to execute his commission.

He spent four days on the job, and during that time secured a matter of 30,000 shares.

The day after he had rendered his statement to the operator he received a check for \$3,750, and he regarded that as a handsome return for four days' labor.

A week later he met a broker with whom he was on friendly terms.

"Say, Somers, I can put you on to a good thing," he said.

"What is it?"

"Norfolk & Virginia. You won't make any mistake if you get in on it. I've bought all I could find the money to pay for."

"Is there a syndicate behind it?"

"A big one, with a barrel of money."

"Sure of that, are you?"

"As much as I'm sure of anything."

"Well, I'm much obliged for the tip, and will look into it."

"Do, if you want to make money."

Norfolk & Virginia was going at 62.

Bob went around to see Mr. Brown, and get his advice, but the operator had gone to Philadelphia.

He called on his uncle, but that gentleman couldn't advise him, except to go slow.

"I don't know how much money you have, for you keep your business to yourself, but if I were in your place, just starting out as a broker, I'd let outside deals alone," he said. "You are liable to get badly burned in your pocket when you least expect such a thing to happen. If you are resolved to speculate, don't put in more than half your capital, no matter how good the prospect looks to you."

Bob thanked him and left.

Next morning he saw that Norfolk & Virginia was up to 64.

He went around to a brokerage house where he was acquainted and bought 5,000 shares, on margin, putting up nearly all his available cash capital.

In case of an emergency he had his United Traction shares, worth nearly \$75,000, to call on.

That afternoon N. & V. went to 65, and next morning opened an eighth higher.

Bob was satisfied that he hadn't made a mistake, and was not at all disappointed because the price remained stationary all that day.

Next morning about eleven it suddenly dropped to 58, and Bob was rather disturbed, for he was now shy \$30,000 on his deal.

While he was looking at the tape in his office the door opened with a bang and Will rushed in.

"Say, Bob, are you in on Norfolk & Virginia?" he asked, hurriedly.

"Yes; why?"

"Then get out of it as quick as you can."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because a job has been put up on you to bleach you."

"Bleach me?"

"Yes. I overheard Bunce, Blumm and another broker talking in a cafe awhile ago, and they are interested in a deal to boom N. & V."

"To boom it? That suits me all right. I've got 5,000 shares, and the boom can't come any too soon, for I'm out \$30,000 so far, owing to a slump in the price."

"Listen to me. The boom won't materialize till you've been squeezed."

"It won't?" cried the little stockbroker.

"No. I heard Blumm say that the tip was sent to you to get you to go in. As soon as he learned that you had bought 5,000 shares——"

"How did he learn it? I made the deal through a good house, and brokers don't give out their customers' business."

"One of the clerks in the office passed the word to Blumm."

"That clerk is likely to get into trouble if what you say is true."

"It is true. The syndicate has cornered about all the stock, and the combine let out the 5,000 shares when it became known that you had ordered that amount. The price had been kept up, and boosted a little, to tempt you. As soon as you were presumed to be in, the slump was brought on, and the combine intends to send it down low enough to wipe out your margin, after which it will be sent up."

"Oh, that's the scheme, eh? You heard Bunce talking it over?"

"I did. Are you caught?"

"So far I am."

"I'm afraid you'll be wiped out of all your money. Fifty thousand is an awful lot to lose."

"Yes, it's a whole lot more than I care to lose."

"What are you going to do?"

"Try and protect myself."

"You'd better run over and see your friend Brown. He's got money enough to carry you through."

"He's in Philadelphia."

"Is he? That's too bad. Who else have you to call on—your uncle?"

"No. I don't intend to worry my relatives with my troubles."

"Then how are you going to save yourself against Bunce, Blumm and their associates?"

"I'll have to figure it out. Thank you for warning me of what is in the wind."

"You're welcome," replied Will, who then said he had to go, and hurried away.

"It looks as if I've tumbled into a trap, but maybe I'll give Bunce and Blumm a surprise. They probably figure that I've put all my money up, and that I can't meet a call for additional margin. I'll fool them there. I guess my United Traction stock will be accepted as security for \$50,000, and that will give me a fresh grip on my deal. They will have to force the price down twelve points more before they will be able to do me."

Bob looked at the tape and saw that N. & V. had gone off another two points.

That made eight altogether, and he had no time to lose. He put on his hat, took his United Traction shares from the safe and went to the brokerage house where he had made his deal.

That afternoon N. & V. closed at 53, which was eleven points lower than Bob paid for it, and represented a loss of the whole of his original margin, and \$5,000 on his second margin.

No doubt Bunce and Blumm were rubbing their hands with satisfaction at the thought that they had got back at the little stockbroker at last.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

A week later, when Norfolk & Virginia had gone up to 70, Bob ran across Bunce and Blumm in the corridor talking together.

They favored the little stockbroker with a sardonic grin.

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen," said Bob, pleasantly.

"Goot-afternoon, my poy," replied Blumm. "How are t'ings coming on mit you?"

"Fine as silk," replied Bob, cheerfully.

Both brokers looked surprised at his reply.

"Vhy, I heard dat you vas caught in a slump last veek," said Blumm.

"You mustn't believe all you hear, Mr. Blumm."

"Vasn't you in on Norfolk & Virshinia at der time dat it vent down?"

"I was."

"And didn't you lose moneys on it?"

"Not a cent."

The brokers looked at each other, plainly disappointed and disgusted.

"You must haf a lot of moneys at your back."

"I have—I've got money to burn. Good-day."

Bob walked into his office chuckling.

"Goodness! They looked as if something disagreed with them when I told them I hadn't lost a cent on Norfolk & Virginia," he laughed, opening his desk. "They might have done me if it hadn't been for my United Traction shares. They saved me, and now I'm \$30,000 ahead on the deal, with the chance of more in prospect."

As a matter of fact, Bob cleaned up \$50,000 on the speculation, and he had the laugh on Bunce and Blumm in addition.

A few weeks later there was a big flurry in Idaho Northern.

Everybody wanted the stock, and the demand sent the price booming.

Bob bought 10,000 shares, and was highly elated when he saw that he was all of \$100,000 ahead.

He was almost sure that he would clear \$50,000 more.

He learned that both Bunce and Blumm had got some of it and were looking for more.

"I suppose they'll come out with a big wad, too," he thought.

That day he dropped in to see Mr. Brown.

"Hello, Bob, how are you coming on?"

"Fine. I'm in on Idaho Northern, and that's the winner just now."

"Are you? How many shares have you?"

"Ten thousand."

"Sell them at once," cried the broker, "and don't lose any time over it, either."

"Why so?" asked Bob, much surprised.

"Don't ask questions, but do as I say. Get out now and attend to the matter."

The operator spoke decisively, and Bob was satisfied that he had better sell.

He started for his broker's.

On the way he ran into Bunce and Blumm.

"Goot-day, my poy," said Blumm.

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen. By the way, I've got some Idaho Northern I have to sell in a hurry. Know anybody who wants any?"

"How many shares have you got?" asked Bunce.

"Ten thousand on margin."

"I'll give you the market for it and take up your margin."

"It's a bargain," said Bob.

"Ve'll go halves, Mr. Bunce, on dat," said Blumm, eagerly. "You don't obsheet?"

"All right, Blumm. You're on. We'll go around with Somers to his broker's and have the deal fixed up," said Bunce.

Fifteen minutes later the matter was settled.

Bunce gave his check for \$100,000, and Blum gave his check for a like sum.

The broker sent them around to the banks and had them certified.

Half an hour later a big bear movement was launched against Idaho Northern, and in ten minutes it went to pieces like a house of cards.

The Exchange was thrown into a panic, and the wildest excitement took place.

Thousands of speculators were ruined that afternoon, and only the closing of the Exchange at three saved a number of brokers.

Next morning several brokers sent word to the Exchange that they couldn't meet their engagements, and among them were Bunce and Blumm, who had been badly scorched.

Their contracts were closed out under the rules, and they had to put up their seats to settle the difference.

They were able to continue business on a small capital, but not as members of the Exchange.

In that respect they were reduced to the same level as the little stockbroker, but as he had over a quarter of a million of cash capital at his back, he was otherwise way ahead of them.

It was the 10,000 shares they took off of Bob which knocked them out, but they couldn't blame him for selling them the stock, since Bunce had offered to take it.

Still they felt deeply chagrined to think that Bob had got out of Idaho Northern just in the nick of time, while they had almost gone to the wall.

Bob now had money to burn in earnest, but even his own family had no idea how much he was worth.

They knew he was doing well, and that was the extent of their knowledge on the subject.

Bob had got into the habit of calling frequently on Elsie Grant.

The more he saw of her the more he thought of her, and

the young lady seemed to be similarly impressed with him. Now that Bob had over a quarter of a million of his own, the \$40,000 that Elsie possessed didn't have much weight with him.

He liked her for herself, and not for her money.

All through the summer he visited her at a nearby summer resort, and when she got back to the city in September they were mighty good friends.

About the first of October there was a sudden boom in a certain stock.

Bob didn't get in on it for some reason, and as the price jumped up he regretted not having done so.

He never cared to tackle any stock after it had gone up quite a bit, as he felt that the cream was off the deal for him.

While everybody was going wild over the boom it suddenly collapsed, and a panic followed.

Hundreds were caught and cleaned out.

Among the brokers who were hard hit was Bob's uncle.

He was unable to meet his engagements and was about to send a notice to that effect to the Exchange when Bob walked in on him and learned his predicament.

"How much do you need, uncle, to save your credit?"

"One hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and I can't raise it."

"You should have come to me."

"You?" exclaimed his uncle, astonished.

"Yes, me. I'll let you have the money with pleasure. It's all in the family, you know."

"Why, you are not worth so much as that."

"Ain't I? I guess I am. I'm worth \$300,000 if I'm worth a cent."

"You don't mean it!"

"Come over to my safe deposit vault and you shall have the cash."

His uncle went with him and received the money, and Bob showed him as much more in his box.

"You have saved me, Bob, and I sha'n't forget it."

"You're welcome, uncle. Say no more about it."

"How did you make so much in so short a time?"

"That is quite a story, uncle, which I can't tell you now. Some other time I will enlighten you."

That evening Bob's family learned for the first time of the extent of his resources.

He told them the story of his quick rise since he left the employ of the trader with whom he had worked for three years.

"You are certainly a wonderful little stockbroker," said his father.

"Yes, I guess I am," laughed Bob, "for I have money to burn."

Next week's issue will contain "ISLAND NUMBER TEN; OR, THE SECRET OF THE SUNKEN GOLD SHIP."

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THE TEN DOCTORS

OR,

TWENTY YEARS IN SEARCH OF A DIAMOND

By PAUL BRADDON

(CHAPTER IX—Continued)

The man leaped from the grave; all lent a hand, and the coffin was drawn to the ground.

Their leader arose.

With his own hands he pried open the rotten box, disclosing the coffin within.

Its sides were worm-eaten and moldy, its plate was black with age.

Without an instant's hesitation he forced the lid.

A grinning skeleton lay exposed.

"Hold the lantern!" he whispered, huskily. "Hold it at the feet!"

He crouched still lower, and seizing with both hands the bony feet of the skeleton, examined them with intense eagerness.

"Am I mad? What does all this mean? These bones are not the bones of my father? From his right foot he had lost three toes?"

The feet of the skeleton were both perfect.

The man staggered back, his face livid. His companions gazed in silent amazement.

"There is some foul trick here!" he hissed. "The double warning—the——"

At this instant there rang through the church-yard a sound which filled its hearers with horror.

It was a fearful shriek.

It was echoed back by the walls of the old church beyond, and resounded through the leafless trees.

The men round the open grave heard it, and trembled with fear.

The skeleton lay grinning within, the thickly-falling snow fast covering his bony features, when the cry rang out through the church-yard again.

As it seemed to come from the direction of the church itself, all turned and looked that way.

As they did so, there suddenly appeared before them the figure of an old man of gigantic stature, clad in a loose robe; his beard, as white as the falling snow, was long and flowing; his hair, of the same color, hung in ringlets down his back.

Advancing slowly toward the open coffin, the figure raised a ghostly hand, and, pointing toward the skeleton within, exclaimed slowly and in deep, sepulchral tones:

"Behold, my work is not yet done! Dominique de la Roche, gaze into yonder coffin and see! Restore, then, the lost gems of the kingly crown!"

CHAPTER X.

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN THE CHURCH-YARD OF ST. BONIFACE—
A FRIEND IN NEED.

The effect of the startling interruption described in the last chapter was instantaneous.

The men dropped their picks and shovels and made for the wall.

Their leader alone maintained his ground.

"Speak!" he cried, turning full upon the figure. "Speak! In Heaven's name who and what are you?"

The figure laughed mockingly, and turning, walked slowly away among the tombs, its long robe of white seeming to mingle with the snow itself.

As it retreated there again rang out through the leafless trees these mysterious words:

"Restore!"

"Restore!"

"Restore!"

The cry dying away in the distance with each repetition.

The man who watched it with such fearful interest hesitated no longer.

"Man or fiend!" he cried, springing forward, "whichever you may be, I must and will know now!"

He dashed over the tombs after the retreating figure.

His companions, ashamed of their cowardice, yet not daring to return and undo their ghastly work, watched him from the shadow of the wall in silence.

Through the thickly falling snow he ran—now leaping among the head-stones—now stumbling against the tombs.

The figure seemed ever flitting before him, but he could not overtake it.

"Restore!"

"Restore!"

"Restore!"

The cry rang out yet again, but now fainter than before.

He approached nearer the church.

The figure suddenly appeared just before him—tall and white in the darkness.

It was the apparition of the previous night. It was the ghost of Finnegan's Roost!

"Halt!" cried the pursuing man. "Stand where you are! I demand further speech with you!"

A low laugh was the sole response.

He reached out his hands to grasp it.

They clutched at the empty air.

The apparition had disappeared!

It was gone! Vanished into thin air!

How or where the man could not tell, but gone it most certainly was, leaving not a trace of its presence behind.

The men, who from the shadow of the wall had been watching these proceedings, at a signal from their leader now flocked round him.

"Search!" he exclaimed; "examine every headstone—every portion of the church wall."

There was nothing to be found.

"Come, doctor," said one of the number, sullenly, "if we are to bury that body again let's be quick about it; there's

no use looking for that thing; it's gone, and we ought to be thankful it didn't take us with it."

What they might have done we cannot tell, for at that moment a shrill whistle was heard from the other side of the wall beyond.

It was the signal agreed upon in case of alarm.

An instant later the figure of a man jumped down from the wall into the church-yard, throwing a ladder after him as he did so, and dashed into their mist.

"Whist! whist! byes!" he cried, in a low, hurried whisper; "the cops is on top of ye! Run for your lives! Saze the ladder, and scale the other wall! Quick, for your lives!"

The men rushed toward the ladder.

A shout upon the other side of the wall was heard, and the loud rapping of a policeman's club upon the pavement rang out in the still night air.

"The other wall, byes—the other wall!" cried the intruder. "It's meself—Bill Leary—that's balked them, for I have their ladder, and divil another can they get for ten minutes to come."

Rushing to the place where he had jumped, he seized the short ladder which he had thrown down, and sped hurriedly over the graves.

Now the church yard of St. Boniface is completely inclosed from the street.

In the rear, as we have seen, ran the high wall which separated it from the alley beyond; to the right was the church itself; to the left rose the high end wall of a block of brick tenements, while in front was another and lower wall than that in the rear, which separated it from the street on which the church stood.

It was toward this wall that Bill Leary ran, carrying the light ladder in his hand.

Nor had the leader of the little band been idle.

Taking in the situation at a glance, he saw that there was not a moment to be lost.

He also dashed to the wall on the alley side, and seized the ladder which they themselves had used.

"Save yourselves, doctors!" he cried. "Every man for himself! Over the wall and scatter!"

Grasping the ladder, he hurried with it across the graveyard, and joined Bill Leary at the front.

The doctors followed, leaving their tools by the side of the open coffin, but seizing their black gowns as they ran.

Hastily climbing the ladders, they dropped one by one into the street.

At the same instant a posse of police dashed into the burial-ground from the other side.

"Hold! you robbers of the dead!" they cried. "Stand where you are, or we fire!"

The Ten Doctors heeded them not, but went over the wall like so many squirrels.

The leader remained until the last.

He leaped the wall, dashing one ladder to the ground as he did so.

He was still clad in his long black cloak, which impeded his motion, and he fell violently to the ground.

He had slipped upon the snow-covered pavement in jumping, and his ankle was badly sprained.

The men had scattered—there was not one to be seen, while the police were even now leaping the wall.

Capture seemed certain, for he was powerless to rise, when suddenly the door of a cab, which he now observed for the first time standing quietly in front of the church-yard, was flung open, and a strong arm dragged him inside.

An instant later, and the cab dashed violently away, leaving the police staring at the empty pavement.

The Ten Doctors had disappeared to a man!

CHAPTER X.

THE MAN IN THE COACH—A LOOK BACKWARD INTO THE PAST.

"Well, Detective Roach, you had a narrow escape that time!" said the man in the coach, as the rescued sufferer sank back upon the cushioned seat.

"Ah! it is you, is it?" exclaimed Doctor 94, looking at him narrowly, by the light of a street lamp, as they bowled swiftly along; "it is to Detective Munhall that I am thus indebted!"

"That's my name day-times!" replied the worthy Simon—for it was indeed he; "and I guess it'll do for to-night; but tell me, Detective Roach, were you not surprised to find me so near at hand!"

"Mr. Munhall, I am surprised at nothing!" replied the other, quietly. "I have lived too hard a life for that—but I thank you for your timely assistance all the same."

"I felt sure that you would take my advice to-night," continued Simon, "and knowing the risk you ran, thought I would be near at hand to render you assistance if needful."

"I owe you a debt of gratitude, Detective Munhall, for with this ankle of mine I should have been on the way to a police station at this moment but for your promptness."

"Don't mention it," said Simon, lightly. "So you think, my friend, that I could not surprise you?"

"I doubt it."

"Shall I try?"

"If you like."

Detective Roach placed his wounded member upon the opposite seat, and lay back in the cab, watching his companion curiously.

He had not the faintest idea in what direction they were going, but he felt that Simon was his friend, and father, that he had upon his mind something of which he wished to free himself, and he waited expectantly for it to appear.

"Now, my friend," he said, "you have free permission to surprise me, if you can."

Detective Munhall gazed at him a moment in silence; then, leaning over, he whispered these words in his ear:

"Dominick Roach, you are an escaped convict!"

The man did not move a muscle of his countenance.

"That's no news to either of us," he said; "you knew it when you allowed me to join your force."

"Suppose I should give you up?"

"If I thought you would—why, then it would simply be a question of your life or mine!"

"True; but on that score I say to you now, you need have no fear."

"I have none."

Detective Munhall hesitated again.

"I haven't succeeded in surprising you yet, it seems," he said at length; "let me try once more."

"Try as often as you please."

"I'll try again. You have been in Sing Sing for twenty years?"

"Twenty years and three months to a day."

"I have seen you there frequently."

"No doubt."

"Look at me. Did you ever see me until the day you entered my office?"

"Never to my knowledge."

"Think—get your memory back into the past."

"I have been thinking ever since you began to speak. I never saw you before."

"Dominick Roach," said Simon, impressively, "your memory fails you. You think you never saw me before in the past, but you did, for on the 10th day of July, 1861, at half-past

eight o'clock in the morning, you saw me at No. — Nassau street, standing before the dead body of the old Frenchman, De la Roche, who was murdered there!"

The ex-convict turned pale, but he did not utter a sound.

"Shall I continue?" asked Simon.

"As you will."

"Then I shall go on, for I believe that I have the power to surprise you yet.

"My office—I was trying to practice law at the time—was directly opposite that of the old Frenchman, and my windows looked directly into his.

"He was a very eccentric old man, regarded as half crazy by all who did not know him intimately; he spent most of his time in his office, even sleeping there for weeks together."

Simon paused.

From his companion there was no reply.

"I looked out of my window at exactly twenty-five minutes past eight on the morning in question, and casting my eyes into the office of the old Frenchman, what do you suppose I saw?"

If Detective Roach was not surprised now, he was certainly strongly moved by some sensation of equal power, for his face had become deathly pale, his teeth were clenched, and his fingers clutched nervously at the cushions of the seat.

"How can I tell?" he said abruptly, striving to appear calm. "I was not there, and if I were my memory is not good enough to recall every little thing which happened to me twenty years ago. Besides, of what interest is all this to me?"

"You say you were not there?" said Simon, looking him full in the eye.

"No."

"You are sure?"

"Sure."

"And you think the events of the 10th of July, 1861, are of no interest to you?"

"I don't know why they should be."

"Perhaps your memory does fail you."

"I have told you that my memory is not good."

"Then let me refresh it; for unless your memory fails you you are deceiving me. Detective Roach, let me refresh it by telling you what I saw from my window on that July morning twenty years ago."

"I am listening."

"I came into my office early that morning," continued Detective Munhall, keeping his eye firmly fixed upon his companion, "for I had a case on hand upon which I was bestowing an unusual amount of study.

"The weather was oppressively hot, and the window, close to which my desk stood, of a consequence was open.

"I had many times before observed the old Frenchman, De la Roche, whose office in the building opposite faced mine; for my windows, as I have already said, looked full into his; and loving to watch curious characters quite as much then as I do now, his movements had, to a great extent, become familiar to me.

"He was a most peculiar individual. Sometimes he would confine himself to his office for days and days together—never leaving it, except for food.

"He had a sofa-bed in one corner of the office, and here he often slept at night, sometimes keeping up this practice for months in succession, although he was well-known to be very rich, having a splendid country seat in New Rochelle on the borders of the Sound, as well as a city house up-town.

"He seemingly was engaged in no business, and entertained few visitors, save an occasional old Frenchman, of much the same stamp as himself, and a young man, whom I afterward knew to be his son.

"When the Frenchman came, the old man would often bring out his fine wines—of which he always appeared to have a full supply, and they would make very merry together, eating and drinking, and singing French songs, until far into the night.

"For a long time I thought him a harmless old lunatic, and had almost ceased to pay any attention to his movements, when an event occurred which aroused again all my former curiosity.

"It was an afternoon in the spring of 1861. I was standing by my open window, smoking and musing upon the possibilities of a war between the North and South—the prevailing topic of the day—when my eyes were suddenly dazzled, as from the reflection of the sun thrown upon them by means of a looking-glass.

"I glanced across the narrow street to the opposite buildings, expecting to find some one playing upon me this well-worn trick, when I suddenly became aware that the light proceeded from the window of the old Frenchman's room.

"I looked more closely.

"In the center of the office stood two men—one monsieur himself, and the other a younger man of foreign appearance.

"It was not the visitor who attracted my attention, however, for visitors in the old man's room were a common sight enough—it was that which the Frenchman held in his hand.

"It was a diamond of enormous proportions.

"He was evidently exhibiting it to the foreigner.

"Powers above! how it did sparkle! It caught the sunlight, and threw it into my eyes with dazzling brilliancy.

"I uttered an involuntary exclamation of surprise.

"The old Frenchman seemed to hear me, and looked up quickly to where I stood.

"In an instant he sprang to the window, pulled down the shade, and I saw the diamond no more."

Detective Munhall paused, and looked intently at his companion, as though trying to read his thoughts.

The man had regained his composure, and from his face there was nothing to be learned.

"Quite a romance," he said, as the cab rattled on. "Is that all?"

"Not half!" returned Simon, abruptly; "hear the rest, and you'll see."

He resumed his story.

"For several days the old Frenchman seemed to shun me, and turned away his head when he met me in the street—as he frequently did, as though afraid that I would speak to him.

"One day he accosted me as follows:

"I saw you looking at my great crystal the other day."

"I couldn't help looking, Mr. de la Roche," I replied; "the sunlight flashed the diamond into my eyes."

"It no diamond! it no diamond!" cried the old man; "it only one great crystal that my friend bring me from France!"

"I made him no answer, for I saw plainly that he was trying to throw dust in my eyes, and make me believe that it was not a real jewel which I had seen; but I knew better than that—I knew it was a diamond, and a monstrous great one, too, so I passed on in silence.

"For some time I saw but little of my eccentric neighbor, as he kept his curtains drawn, and seemed determined to exclude observation. Indeed, I had well-nigh forgotten him and his diamond or crystal, when my attention was again attracted to his room one afternoon by the sound of voices, talking in loud, angry tones.

"I glanced across the street, and beheld the old man and his son—a young fellow about twenty—engaged in a fierce quarrel.

(This story to be continued in our next issue.)

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